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“Our Stories Are More Powerful Together, Than They Are Apart”: A Chicana/Latina
Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory (1972–2021)

A dissertation in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Cindy Raquel Escobedo

2021

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2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Our Stories Are More Powerful Together, Than They Are Apart”: A Chicana/Latina
Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory (1972–2021)

by

Cindy Raquel Escobedo

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Daniel G. Solórzano, Co-Chair

Professor David Gumaro García, Co-Chair

This dissertation tells a story about raced and gendered socialization processes that develop across generations, among a distinct yet growing population: Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters who attend U.S. colleges and universities at the same time. Specifically, I analyze how nine mother-daughter teams (22 women in total) leverage their carework to facilitate their individual and collective movement through U.S. higher education spaces over a 50-year span. The study’s qualitative, phenomenological design employs individual and group pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) and a qualitative methodology I am developing, the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology (CRFEM) (Escobedo & Camargo Gonzalez, under review). By triangulating 42 letters, 17 individual and 7 group pláticas, and reflexive journal materials, I inquire: (a) What are the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college between the 1970s

and 2020s? and (b) What are the pedagogies the motherscholars and daughterscholars developed and imparted to one another as they navigated higher education?

Several findings stand out in the Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory. First, this research designates the 1970s as the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar point of genesis, and it names the de Uriarte family as pioneers who initiated the birth of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena in the U.S. Findings further indicate that Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars have historically endured challenges such as internalizing and responding to racial and maternal microaggressions (Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Vega, 2019) and struggling to balance academic and domestic demands. In spite of these hurdles, the women traversed the terrains of motherhood, daughterhood, and scholarhood by intentionally engaging in care practices that nurtured their spiritual, physical, and interpersonal wellbeing, practices I have termed Chicana/Latina daughterwork and Chicana/Latina motherwork (Caballero et al., 2017; Collins, 2009). By leveraging their motherwork and daughterwork, the women developed motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies. I contend, motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies are a microaffirmative (Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020) socialization tool that Women of Color draw on to facilitate their physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic wellbeing. In addition to complicating the discourse on Chicana/Latina education, this research contributes to a (limited, yet) growing archive of Chicana/Latina educational history.

The dissertation of Cindy Raquel Escobedo is approved.

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DEDICATION

To my mom, Dr. Cecilia R. Escobedo, and my sister, (soon to be) Dr. Abigail M. Escobedo, thank you for uplifting me and pushing me to be the best version of myself. I dedicate this dissertation to you both. I am because we are.

To my dad, Gilbert Escobedo, thank you for modeling selflessness and for sustaining me in mind and spirit. From you, I learned to “keep swimming,” and to celebrate life and all the beauties in it. I dedicate my doctoral degree to you. May your light shine through in this work.

To my research collaborators, this dissertation is just as much mine, as it is yours. Thank you for granting me the honor of documenting and preserving our collective educational histories. In Lak’ech. Tú eres mi otro yo.

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Escobedo, C. R. (2018). Book review: Critical race spatial analysis: Mapping to understand and address educational inequity. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 15(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1908g63w>

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PROLOGUE

A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity . . . We do this bridging by naming our selves and by telling our stories in our own words.

(Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 23)

Numerous studies exist which denote the transformational potential behind Chicana/Latina¹ writings and scholarship. Understood as a literature of resistance, texts written by and about Chicana/Latina scholars often take the form of testimonials and personal narratives that analyze the nexus of motherhood, daughterhood, and education from a Woman of Color² standpoint. In their acknowledgement pages and throughout their texts, many of these scholars express gratitude to their families, especially their mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, aunts, and *compañeras*³ (Santos & Crowe Morey, 2013). The women who share their narratives as research collaborators⁴ in these studies similarly convey their appreciation for *mujeres*⁵ who influenced their educational pursuits (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Flóres, 2016; Gándara, 2005).

¹ When I use Chicana/Latina I refer to women of Latin American descent, but also to women from across Latin American including Mexico, South and Central American. I use Latina/o and Chicana/o as opposed to Hispanic because, Latina/o and Chicana/o identifiers are inclusive of people of Latin American descent who also have Indigenous roots. The term Hispanic is a reference to Hispanic and is not inclusive of these ethnic groups' Indigenous cultures.

² Like Pérez Huber et al. (2006), I strategically capitalize Woman/Women of Color, Mothers of Color, Daughters of Color, People of Color, Students of Color, Families of Color, and Communities of Color to challenge the marginalization of these groups.

³ *Compañeras* translates to female companions. To note, I do not italicize words written in Spanish as a way to challenge the hegemony of the English language.

⁴ Sara Lawrence Lightfoot (2005) refers to her research participants as “collaborators” to acknowledge the central and collaborative roles they assume throughout the entire research process. I draw inspiration from this and refer to my research participants as collaborators. Moreover, I think of my participants as collaborators because I hope to honor their capacities to Theorize from the Flesh (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). Moreover, in line with Chicana Feminist Epistemology, I honor their contributions as co-creators of knowledge.

⁵ *Mujeres* translates to women.

These affirmations, preserved in textual and oral formats, become sites of solidarity and resistance against white⁶ hetero-patriarchal systems. Delgado Bernal and Alemán (2016) might argue that undergirding these educational resistance narratives is a potential for healing that ‘transforms’ and ‘ruptures’ deficit discourses about Chicana/Latina women in education. By documenting transformational narratives of educational resistance, we⁷ note a “chipping away at structures of oppression that allow us to dream audacious and work towards something different” (Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2016, p. 90), something that aligns more connectedly with the educational life stories of Chicana/Latina women across time and space.

In a similar tradition and with similar objectives, I begin this dissertation by sharing my own educational life history, that which I am calling the Escobedo-Alvarez Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory.⁸ In the sections that follow, I identify the motherscholar-daughterscholar genesis point in my own family history by narrating a story which details the educational life experiences of the Escobedo and Alvarez families, my paternal and maternal families of origin. I do this to provide a rationale for why I am interested in conducting research that centers the Chicana/Latina mother-daughter relationship. Drawing on the case of a Mexican American family living in the greater Los Angeles region, I detail how the women on the maternal and paternal sides of my family have worked collaboratively to reach our post-secondary goals in the United States. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1983) would describe this storytelling practice as theorizing from the flesh. This “theory in the flesh means

⁶ Whereas white is written in lowercase, other racial/ethnic identity labels are intentionally capitalized to reject the standard grammatical norm. The capitalization of historically minoritized identities represents a grammatical move toward social and racial justice.

⁷ Throughout this dissertation, I often include myself when discussing Women of Color and Daughters of Color by using phrases such as “we,” “us,” and “ourselves.”

⁸ I refer to the Escobedo-Alvarez educational history as a Mujerstory to recenter the women (mujeres) and to honor my cultural heritage and native language, Spanish.

one where the physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity” (p. 23).

I begin this narrative by first introducing the women who make up the Alvarez⁹ and Escobedo¹⁰ families.¹¹ While the Alvarez and Escobedo families are extensions of my immediate familia,¹² their teachings and communal knowledge-sharing influence the ways my mother and I have traversed through the world—especially when it comes to navigating higher education spaces. Following this, I introduce my mother, Dr. Cecilia R. Escobedo, and I detail how her educational journey through the U.S. higher education system has impacted and informed my own academic trajectory. Finally, I argue, centering my family's and my own educational experiences furthers discourse on epistemology, research methodologies, and insider positionality. Moreover, it challenges the traditional Western norm of research that calls for the separation of personal and communal experiences from the research process itself (Chavez, 2008; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). I am intentional about foregrounding my motherscholar-daughterscholar “telling case”¹³ (Mitchell, 1984) because it influences the design and analysis of this dissertation in its entirety. I ultimately contend, data from the Escobedo-Alvarez Birthstory demonstrates a case telling of larger narratives about Chicana/Latina intergenerational¹⁴ successes in higher education.

⁹ The Alvarez surname is connected with the maternal side of my family.

¹⁰ The Escobedo surname is connected with the paternal side of my family.

¹¹ Throughout this dissertation, I refer to both my maternal and paternal families as the Escobedo-Alvarez family. When I include the hyphenation, I am indicating that both families are separate, yet blended in the context of this narrative.

¹² Familia translates to family.

¹³ A telling case sheds light on “previously obscure theoretical relationship (Mitchell, 1984, p. 239).

¹⁴ I would like to note that I am very particular about my use of the word generation in this study. I approach discussions about generations in two ways: (a) as a reference to familial generations; and (b) as a reference to college generation. When I speak about familial generations, I referring to ancestral lines of

A Cautionary Note on the Escobedo-Alvarez Mujer-Story

This dissertation shares the Escobedo-Alvarez Birthstory in a cautionary way. As Cuádriz (2006) stresses, discussions surrounding the educational success of historically underrepresented groups (such as Students of Color and Chicana/Latina scholars) are subject to a politics of exceptionality whereby high academic achievement is considered anomalous and extraordinary. This framing is problematic because it maintains an aura of mystery, and thus absolves the institution from accountability to these communities. Indeed, “by individualizing their achievements and focusing on their characteristics as individuals, the focus of social policies with respect to educational attainment remains focused on the individual achiever and not on the institutional processes and structural opportunities that maximize the possibilities for achievement” (p. 83).

Analyzing the Escobedo-Alvarez Educational Birthstory from a meritocratic and individualist standpoint will not do the story justice. Instead, it can reinforce deficit stereotypes which paint Chicanas/Latinas as passive, homebound, and uneducated (Gándara, 1995, 2013). For this reason, I intend to highlight how the Escobedo-Alvarez women continue to be educated¹⁵ by means of communal and familial pedagogical processes. While I recognize Chicanas/Latinas are vastly underrepresented at all levels of the higher education sector (Pérez

descent typically, though not always, sustained through biological ties (i.e., grandmothers, mothers, daughters, etc.). When I speak about college generations, I am making a reference to markers of college enrollment and/or completion as they exist within families and across familial generations (i.e., first-generation college student, second generation college student.) These distinctions are important to make especially when considering that college generation labels do not always match familial generation labels. As we will see throughout the study, there will be times when a daughterscholar (a member of the third familial generation) will be a first-generation college student. Operationalizing generations in these very distinct ways is of vital importance for a study that makes meaning of intergenerational teaching and learning practices that unfold between Motherscholars and Daughterscholars of Color.

¹⁵ I operationalize educación later in this chapter and in Chapter Two.

Huber et al., 2015) and the Escobedo-Alvarez women merit recognition for their academic successes, I do not posit them as exceptional when compared to their racial/ethnic counterparts. Indeed, the Escobedo and Alvarez women have had access to privileged opportunities for success—such as instrumental support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003) from formally educated siblings, and emotional support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003) offered by a strong familial network—throughout their educational journeys. However, I would also like to acknowledge that the Escobedo-Alvarez women continue to endure structural, institutional, political, and cultural challenges as they navigate higher education. Now, to bridge my own educational history with broader discourses about Chicana/Latina students, with caution, and in good faith, I share the Escobedo-Alvarez Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory.

The Escobedo-Alvarez Educational Birthstory

I come from a long lineage of Mexicana/Chicana women who are highly educated and resilient. When I say the women in my family are highly educated, I do not mean for such a statement to imply presumptuous undertones. For Chicana/o and Latina/o families, the concept of *nón* (Spanish for education,) means more than just education in the limiting, Western sense of schooling. Rather, it is based upon a broad-based definition of education that assumes Chicana/o and Latina/o children use the lessons, values, and cultural knowledge that were passed down from previous generations to help guide decision making with regards to school, work, and life more generally (Valdés, 1996). My family and I bear fruits of a humble upbringing and are taught (expected actually) not to boast of our academic achievement outside of sharing such accomplishments within our family circle. However, our intergenerational successes¹⁶ as Chicana/Mexicana scholars within the U.S. schooling system merit recognition.

¹⁶ This dissertation explores success in a cautionary way. I am cognizant of how measures of success and intelligence are based on middle-class white values and cultural behaviors which privilege meritocratic

On both the maternal (Alvarez) and paternal (Escobedo) sides of my family, we—las mujeres—are doctors, college professors, college counselors, K-12 educators, nurses, and scholars concurrently navigating U.S. schooling at every level of the K-24 educational pipeline. We all identify as first-generation¹⁷ college students, and many of us are pursuing academic careers of varying degrees at the same time. That is, many of us are pursuing higher education concurrently, albeit at different institutions and in pursuit of different degree types.

Take the women on the maternal side of my family as an example. My maternal grandmother was taught by Catholic nuns until the third grade, when she lived in Michoacán, Mexico. Before immigrating to South El Monte, California in 1981, Ana Maria birthed 7 children, 4 of whom have grown to become highly formally educated and professional women. Of the 4 Alvarez women (the second familial generation of women), 2 have doctoral degrees. This academic attainment trend extends beyond the second familial generation of Alvarez women and informs the third generation of young women and girls (my generation). For example, my maternal grandmother Anna Maria has 25 grandchildren, 9 of whom are college-aged women and young girls. Of these 9, all are pursuing academic degrees at every level of the K-24 education pipeline: 4 at the graduate level (including me, Cindy); 5 pursuing their undergraduate studies (including my younger sister, Abigail Maria); and 5 in the process of

indicators of intelligence and posit college degree attainment as a singular measure of success. For the purposes of this study, success and intelligence extend beyond traditional constructs to include holistic measures of success and intelligence as they are understood in terms of educación.

¹⁷ The “first generation” designation is based on parents’ educational attainment and not on the students’ immigrant status. Traditionally, parents highest level reflects the highest degree earned by either parent has been used to characterize college generation status (Cataldi et al., 2018). However, this study complicates the “first generation” label by considering the education attainment of children in the characterization of college generation status.

completing their K-12 studies. All of my primas¹⁸, myself included, are on track (and are expected) to meet the goal of college enrollment and graduation.

A similar narrative of Chicana/Latina educational achievement is evident on the paternal side of my family. My paternal grandmother, Abigail Escobedo, had dreams of becoming a grade schoolteacher in Jalisco, Mexico. She was also educated by Catholic nuns and eventually did become a schoolteacher in 1957 after earning her diploma¹⁹ for completing la secundaria²⁰ in Mexico. Much like my maternal grandmother, Abigail did not get the opportunity to pursue higher education when she immigrated to greater Los Angeles in 1973.

Though my grandmother Abigail did not continue her studies in the U.S., 2 of her 5 children, my aunts, had an opportunity to pursue and earn Bachelor degrees. The Escobedo women of the second generation (my aunts) now teach at the elementary school level. The third generation of Escobedo women (my generation) continues to observe higher educational attainment and success. For example, my grandmother Abigail was blessed with 9 grandchildren, 4 whom are women. Of these 4 women, 2 hold graduate degrees (this includes me, Cindy), 1 is completing her undergraduate career (my younger sister, Abby), and 1 is in high school. Like the expectation on the Alvarez side of my family, all of the Escobedo women of the third generation are expected to graduate with a bachelor's degree, at the bare minimum. They all however, express interest in earning (and without a doubt will earn) doctoral degrees in the near future. Within this larger context of Chicana/Latina educational attainment, my mother and I have traversed through our doctoral programs in Nursing Practice and Education, respectively.

¹⁸ Primas translates to female cousins.

¹⁹ My maternal grandmother earned the equivalent of a high school diploma in Mexico in 1956; specifically, at La Universidad Alejandro Redo in El Dorado, Sinaloa.

²⁰ The U.S. equivalent of La Secundaria would be high school. La Secundaria literally translates to secondary school.

Undoubtedly, my mother's and my educational realities are intrinsically tied to and embedded in the Escobedo-Alvarez Educational Birthstory.

I now transition to further describe my motherscholar-daughterscholar story, but before I proceed, I offer a visual breakdown of K-24 educational attainment in the Escobedo-Alvarez family as it currently stands in December 2021. Table 1 shows a breakdown of educational attainment according to gender, as well as degree conferral and degrees in progress. To note, this table does not include family members who are not yet enrolled in high school. Given that time is not static, I acknowledge that this table will continue to change over the years as more of the Escobedo-Alvarez family members move through the educational pipeline. In a similar fashion, I anticipate changes in Chicana/Latina educational enrollment, retention, and graduation at all levels of the pipeline across the United States.

Table 1

Three Generations of Escobedo-Alvarez Educational Attainment: Academic Degree

Conferrals and Academic Degrees In Progress

	Number of Family Members	High School Degree or Equivalent	Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
Women	26	15 (2)	7 (2)	10 (1)	6	3 (1)
Men	26	16 (0)	3	3	1 (1)	1
Total	52	31 (2)	10 (2)	13 (1)	7 (1)	4 (1)

*Degree in Progress Denoted in Parenthesis

Becoming Formally Educated: For and With My Mother

I first became interested in documenting Chicana/Latina family educational histories at the age of 10, when my then 30-year-old mother made the courageous decision to return back to college after having been pushed out²¹ of high school 13 years prior. Actually, my mother's return to Rio Hondo College in 2003 was her second (and final) attempt at pursuing higher education in the United States. However, it is that which has most directly affected my own educational life aspirations. It was during this time when I began to take note of how my own mother made intentional attempts at merging formal schooling, with home learning spaces.

My mother established and sustained the bridge between school and home in very particular ways. I vividly recall commuting to Rio Hondo College, in Whittier, California, on a regular basis and accompanying my mother to significant places on her college campus. Some of these included the financial aid office where she applied for fee waivers that would help her pay

²¹ I use the word “push out” instead of the traditional term “drop out” to challenge the deficit discourses which blame students for their academic failures, as opposed to examining systems and structures that force students out of the educational system (Valencia & Black, 2002).

for tuition and our meals at home; her English and Math classes that I regularly participated in, though I was 11 and not of traditional college-going age; the cafeteria where we shared homemade torta sandwiches and juice boxes during class breaks; and the library where she sipped on tea and studied for exams while I quietly tucked handwritten notes into her notebooks.

My mother kept many of the notes that I wrote to her in the pockets of her binders; she even laminated some and turned them into bookmarks. During her study breaks, she wrote letters and scribbles back to me—gentle reminders to continue studying, handmade book—marks with prayers inscribed on them, and drawings with flowers, suns, and stick figures of a mother embracing her daughter. In effect, my mother made a point to model the importance of sustaining the mother-daughter relationship in the midst of academic hardship, all the while teaching me to appreciate studying and schooling. She and I did this by using our motherwritings²² and my daughterwritings²³ as platforms from which to engage non-verbal discussions about schooling, spirituality, family, caregiving, and creativity. These writing practices would ultimately inspire me to continue writing about our educational journeys as mother and daughter, through the course of my K-24 career.

For instance, throughout my elementary and middle school years, I recorded the development of our maternal and daughter relationship through letters and notes. In high school and in my undergraduate course of study, I documented these narratives in the form of poems and essays for class assignments. Now, in my doctoral work, I continue to preserve our motherscholar-daughterscholar educational life history but have chosen to use this doctoral

²² Motherwritings are writings that speak from a maternal subjectivity. Motherwritings “can work to construct, or even create, maternal subjectivity by bringing together in the same textual space the aggregate of identities that mothers possess and establishing a viable relationship” (Juhasz, 2003, p. 400).

²³ Daughterwriting, much like motherwritings (Juhasz, 2003), are writings that speak from the perspective of daughters to construct a daughter subjectivity.

dissertation as my writing platform. Through the mutual sharing of letters, prayers, and home-made artwork, my mother and I learned how to be writers, scholars, daughters, and mothers alongside one another. Essentially, we came to develop our own motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies, through our writing and caregiving as we navigated the U.S. education system. The epistolary methodology has vastly influenced the way I learned from and engaged with my mother; therefore, it informs the methods and methodology used in the present study.²⁴

Becoming Educadas: Escobedo-Alvarez Othermothers

While my mother's academic examples impacted my college aspirations most directly, several of the Alvarez-Escobedo women also played significant roles in modeling and fostering academic success at the post-secondary level. For instance, much like my mother, many of my mother's sisters and sisters-in-law (my *tias*²⁵) socialized their children (mis primas²⁶) to become comfortable in the college setting. In fact, aunts on both sides of my family attended Rio Hondo College alongside my mother (though at staggered points in her college career), making it such that going to college was literally a family affair, and a familial expectation. I often saw my aunts on campus and by extension, my cousins who accompanied my aunts. I recall studying with my cousins, studying with my mother, and in between it all, taking care of my younger siblings and primas. We, las mujeres Escobedo-Alvarez, all shared books, and notes, took turns babysitting, and advocated for each other's personal, familial, and academic success. Though we were not all biological mothers to one another, we engaged in very specific care practices *with* one another. We were othermothers,²⁷ but at the same time, scholars. I'd like to say that we were

²⁴ I explain this more in Chapter Three.

²⁵ *Tias* translates to aunts.

²⁶ *Primas* translates to cousins.

²⁷ The term Othermother(s) used throughout this paper refers to "women who assist bloodmothers by

and continue to be othermotherscholars because we normalized the motherscholar-daughterscholar experience on an extended family scale. This mothering and daughtering familial configuration continues to stand as the norm today, though we face different challenges than those of years previous.

Humbled by these accolades, yet proud of our collective accomplishments, I affirm, we, *las mujeres Escobedo, y las mujeres Alvarez, somos bien educadas*. We are highly educated in terms of our cultural knowledge base, but also with regards to western measures of academic success that posits college-going and college degree attainment as privileged markers of success. In measuring my family's educational life history against existing scholarship, it becomes evident that my family's educational reality is by far a deviation from the stories of academic failure and educational deficiency that plague literature about Chicana/o and Latina/o families²⁸, and about Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters in particular.

Centering the Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Relationship

Although this narrative of Chicana/Latina achievement is not the traditional story recorded in academic or popular discourses, the case of the Escobedo and Alvarez families is telling of an educational reality burgeoning across the United States. It points to a very particular phenomenon shaping the experiences of Chicana/Latina scholars—that of motherscholars and daughterscholars, aunty-scholars and niece-scholars, cousin-scholars and sister-scholars, all navigating higher education at the same time. While all of the aforementioned relationships (i.e., auntscholar-niecescholar, cousinscholar-cousinscholar, sisterscholar-

sharing mothering responsibilities” (Collins, 2009, p. 192).

²⁸ For more information, see (Valencia, 2011).

sisterscholar) merit recognition, I chose to focus on one specific dynamic, the mother-daughter relationship.

The reasons for centering the maternal and daughteral in this dissertation are two-fold. On the one hand, this study stems from a curiosity about the developing relationship of reciprocity and educational support I have cultivated alongside my mother, over the past decade. This relationship continues to inform my research interests. In fact, it is precisely because I have pursued college alongside my mother that I became interested in engaging in research that centers the Chicana/Latina mother-daughter relationship. On the other hand, existing research affirms that the mother-daughter relationship significantly impacts Chicana/Latina educational pathways (Flores, 2016; Gándara et al., 2013; Villenas & Moreno, 2001) yet there are significant theoretical, methodological, and empirical gaps. This dissertation extends discourses on mother-daughter relationships in education from a theoretical, methodological, and empirical standpoint.

Summing Up and Looking Forward

In reflecting on my family's education life history, that which includes my mother, but also the other mujeres in my family, I am moved to investigate and make meaning of the educational journeys of Chicana/Latina mother-daughter dyads and triads concurrently pursuing college across the nation. Essentially, I am not convinced that my mother and I (as well as the Escobedo and Alvarez women) are an anomaly; that we are the only Chicana/Latina mother-daughter groups graduating from college and pursuing graduate and professional degrees at the same time, in the entire United States. In fact, after excavating online archives and personal networks, I can attest to the fact that these motherscholar-daughterscholar teams exist. Though they occupy an invisible presence in academic literature, they indeed are thriving.²⁹ In this

²⁹ I elaborate on this further in Chapters One and Two.

dissertation, I visibilize this highly resilient population by rooting this inquiry in critical epistemologies and by employing culturally relevant research methodologies. As the opening epigraph prompts, I incorporate my own narrative and my personal experiences throughout this dissertation, using it as a platform from which to highlight the stories of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars pursuing higher education concurrently, across the United States. It is my hope that this dissertation does their narratives, and my own, justice.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Our production of knowledge begins in the bodies of our mothers and grandmothers, in the acknowledgement of the critical practices of women of color before us.

(Cruz, 2001, p. 61)

This dissertation tells a story about raced, gendered, and classed socialization processes that develop across generations, among a distinct yet growing population: Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters who attend U.S. colleges and universities at the same time. Specifically, it analyzes how nine Chicana/Latina mother-daughter teams (22 women in total) leverage their carework to facilitate their individual and collective movement through U.S. higher education systems over an approximate 50-year time span (from the 1970s to the 2020s). I craft an intellectual genealogy that uplifts Women of Color matrilineages by (as the opening epigraph suggests,) looking to the teaching and learning that takes place between mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, *comadres*,³⁰ and *compañeras*.³¹ That is, I center the mother-daughter relationship to document the ways that Chicanas/Latinas have developed and imparted upon one another pedagogies of resistance rooted in an ethic of care, to overcome challenges which impede college access and retention. I conceptualize the exchange of these values, behaviors, and socialization practices along the lines of what Villenas & Moreno (2001) call Latina mother-daughter pedagogies, or “the embodied, improvised, and contested” teaching and learning processes that occurs between mothers and daughters through *consejos*, *cuentos*, y *la experiencia* (p. 671).

³⁰ *Comadres* translates to co-mother. Mercado-López (2010) reminds us, “Chicana mothering is not exclusive to the birth mother; extended family members, such as grandmothers and close female friends or relatives called *comadres* (co-mothers), may frequently assist with the childcare responsibilities while the mother works” (pp. 178–179).

³¹ *Compañeras* translates to female companions.

This framing allows me to construct a narrative about Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar teaching and learning across time and space. Findings from this research extend theoretical, methodological, and empirical discourses about Chicana/Latina education and contribute to a (limited, yet) growing archive of Women of Color mother-daughter intellectual genealogies. In the sections that follow, I provide a brief overview of the educational status and academic plight of Chicana/Latina scholars in the United States to contextualize the research. I then make a case for the study of motherscholars and daughterscholars, I introduce the questions guiding this research, and I provide a roadmap of the dissertation. Ultimately, I push us to consider new and culturally relevant methodologies to capture Woman of Color narratives; and it leads us to (re)focuses our research, practice, and policy lenses as we consider the unique educational needs of Chicana/Latina women navigating U.S. higher education systems

The Educational Plight of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in the United States

Chicana/o and Latina/o students are among the most vastly undereducated and underrepresented students in higher learning institutions. Though they have experienced significant growth, their educational attainment, as measured through college retention and graduate rates, continues to lag far behind the national average (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). The total number of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os entering college and graduating with degrees has increased, but gaps in educational attainment indicate they continue to be outperformed by their Caucasian, Asian, and African American counterparts (Pérez Huber et al., 2015; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). Data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity reflects this ever-increasing achievement-gap (Howard, 2010).

New reports will confirm that Chicano/Latino males indeed are in the midst of an educational crisis as they are entering into and graduating from college at significantly lower

rates than Chicana/Latina women (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). In response to these disparaging findings, we have noted a scholarly shift away from Chicana/o and Latina/o centered inquiry to that which examines the experiences of Chicano/Latina males more particularly.³² While it is imperative that we conduct research to addresses the specific challenges Chicanos/Latinos endure, I argue, we must also recommit to examining the educational trajectories of Chicana/Latina women (Gándara et. al, 2013). These scholars face very distinct challenges given their racialized and gendered identities. Moreover, Chicana/Latinas will constitute a large part of the population in the years to come, thus, their educational advancement is vital for the intellectual and economic success of the country at large (Gándara, 2015). In order to gain a more holistic account of Chicana/Latina educational progression, and to make recommendations for areas of improvement, we turn to the educational pipeline. The educational pipeline traces Chicana/Latina movement through formalized education systems. The next section will share some of these statistics.

The State of Chicana/Latina Education

The demographic landscape of the United States is changing. Since the 1990s, the number of Latinas/os has more than doubled rendering Latinas/os, at 54 million, the largest racial minority group in the U.S. (Gándara, 2015). In her 2015 report, Dr. Patricia Gándara shares that one in five women in the U.S. is a Latina. Within the context of U.S. public schools, one in four female students identifies as a Latina girl/woman. Indeed, Chicanas/Latinas have made great strides in terms of enrolling in and persisting through college. However, they are still the least

³² See for example Dr. Tyrone C. Howard's Black Male Institute at UCLA (2009), Dr. Victor Saenz's (2010) Project MALES at the University of Texas at Austin, and President Barack Obama's (2014) My Brother's Keeper Initiative. While my intentions are not to be dismissive of the important work centering Men of Color nor, to posit Women of Color against Men of Color, I do make this point so as to be mindful of the unique challenges each group faces.

likely of women of all major racial/ethnic subgroups to complete a college degree at every level of the higher educational pipeline (Gándara, 2015; Pérez Huber et al., 2015). Many of those Chicanas/Latinas who do enroll in college enter through the community college system and often have a challenging time transferring to a four-year university and completing their degrees (Gándara, 2015). As such, only 39% of Chicana/Latina women will enroll in four-year universities, compared to 50% of Black women, 60% of white women, and 67% of Asian women (Gándara, 2015). Critical Race researchers Watford et al. (2006) affirm that Chicana/Latina college enrollment at the graduate and professional level has increased numerically, but Chicana/Latina students still achieve relatively low completion rates when compared to their racial and ethnic counterparts (Espino, 2014; Gándara, 2015). Several factors have been noted as contributing to this disparate educational reality.

Throughout their undergraduate and graduate journeys, Chicanas/Latinas endure prolonged exposure to raced, gendered, classed, and ageist microaggressions (Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Vega, 2019; Yosso et al., 2009). These layered, everyday assaults on the Brown, Female Body (Cruz, 2001) have been shown to affect Chicana/Latina academic performance, as well as lead many women to develop psychological and physiological conditions which negatively impact their educational and life endeavors (Cueva, 2014; Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020). With regards to the particular educational experiences of motherscholars, Caballero and colleagues (2017) and Anaya (2011) reminds us that, “Mothers of Color are often institutionally pushed out because they do not receive credit for their feminized labor, nor do they receive resources to adequately accommodate their motherwork” (Caballero et al., 2017, p. 49). As such, institutional and cultural issues continue to directly affect the academic advancement of Chicana/Latina scholars in ways that manifest as contrarian to their educational mobility.

Although Chicanas/Latinas receive more graduate and professional degrees than their male counterparts (Pérez Huber et al., 2015; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008), they are underrepresented as faculty members. In fact, Chicanos/Latinos outweigh Chicanas/Latinas in all faculty ranks except as instructors and lecturers (González, 2006). In the 2012 anthology, *Presumed Incompetent*, Gutierrez et al. and contributing authors outline some of the challenges Chicana/Latina faculty members endure. Some of these include (but are not limited to) racism, tokenism, marginalization, and hostile campus climates. In spite of these obstacles, the literature shows that Women of Color-oriented networks play a significantly positive role in fostering community, resiliency, and educational success among marginalized student populations (Collins, 2009; Gándara, 1987,1995).

Chicana/Latina Mother-Daughter Relationships

Existing scholarship will attribute Chicana/Latina academic success to support from female-centered networks, which include, but are not limited to those relationships nurtured through social, academic, and familial ties (Collins, 2009; Flores, 2016; Gándara et al., 2013). Within these woman-oriented circles, mother and daughter relationship carry the most weight in terms of influencing college-going aspirations (Gándara, 2005; Gándara et. al, 2013). It is not surprising then, that Chicana/Latina daughterscholars often write about the ways their mothers influence their identities as daughters, feminists, and students (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Flores, 2016; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). In a similar tradition, Chicana/Latina academic mothers frequently write about, and attribute their educational success to inspiration their children offer (Caballero et al., 2017, 2019; Matias & Nishi, 2018; Vega, 2019). Both bodies of literature—those which reflect the maternal and daughteral perspective—significantly challenge traditional perceptions of the educated, Chicana/Latina woman. Moreover, these distinct, yet very

interconnected scholarly narratives have set the foundation for a developing archive of Chicana/Latina motherscholar and daughterscholar educational testimonios (Burciaga & Navarro, 2015). That is, they have come to function as exemplars that affirm the solidarity, resilience, and wisdom that Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars cultivate as they navigate various academic, social, and cultural terrains (Villenas, 2006).

Though independently, research on mothers and daughters has significantly challenged deficit perceptions about the educated Chicana/Latina, rarely if ever, have such studies examined the nuances which color the socio-academic and socio-familial experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars whose educational careers are intertwined and/or have overlapped at some point. To my knowledge, no scholarship exists which examines the unique educational experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars concurrently navigating college in the United States. One way to explain this gap in the literature is by unpacking the widely held belief that motherscholar-daughterscholar groups attending college at the same time do not exist. Persons who ascribe to this framework (academics and non-academics) may follow this line of thinking: Since present scholarship indicates that Chicana/Latina daughters have a low probability of attending college in the first place (Pérez Huber et al., 2015), it is highly unlikely that the daughter's mother would pursue college as well. Since Chicana/Latina mothers may be immigrants, may be working class, and may be juggling numerous responsibilities in the home and workplace which could interfere with schooling (Lapayese, 2012), they (allegedly) must not, and could not be students and mothers at the same time (Anaya, 2011; Caballero et al., 2017, 2019). As such, it would be even more unlikely that a daughter and a mother would (and could) attend college concurrently given the aforementioned conditions. For these reasons, it would be safe to assume that no such motherscholar-daughterscholar dyads exist. Though this popular line

of thinking is normalized among academic and non-academic circles, it is fundamentally flawed in that it ascribes to cultural deficit understandings of Chicana/Latina women and families (Valencia, 2012; Valencia & Black, 2002; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Moreover, it perpetuates deficit discourses that paint Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters as unwilling and incapable of pursuing formal education (Flores, 2016).

Surely there are folks who argue the alternative by refuting cultural deficit perceptions about Chicana/Latina women. But if there are scholars who refuse to ascribe to such deficit framings, why then is research on Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars still vastly undertheorized? One response might be related to the study of Chicana/Latina women in higher education more generally. The scholarship of Women of Color Feminists has played a key role in extending discourses on Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Flores, 2016; Flores Carmona, 2010; Villenas & Moreno, 2010; Villenas 2006). However, research that investigates the joint experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars is relatively new and emerging such that no scholarship of this nature exists, to my knowledge. On the other hand, scholars may choose not to study this population because they might assume motherscholar-daughterscholar groups exist in quantities that are too small and/or too insignificant to consider for research purposes. Thus, they may direct their attention to tangential areas of research that may very well merit recognition and warrant further scholarly exploration.³³ Taken together, these reasons might have therefore led to a limited interest in conducting research that examines the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars in the U.S.

³³ In making these claims, I do not discount existing scholarship on Chicana/Latina women, rather I strive to emphasize that research in this specific area is starkly absent.

Making a Case for Studying Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Teams

In spite of the looming void in the research cannon, I contend, it is necessary that we refocus our analysis to include a Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar lens in Educational research. This perspective is important for further unpacking the ways Mothers and Daughters of Color navigate higher education systems. If we are to support these women in their educational pursuits and advocate for their academic advancement, we must find them, listen to them, and work in solidarity alongside them. This is by far not a straightforward and effortless task; but it is one this research commits to.

In pursuing this study, one of the greatest challenges I faced was making a case for centering the chosen population, and “proving” to an academic audience that Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar teams attending college concurrently merit scholarly exploration. I struggled most with this tension in the beginning stages of developing the study. For example, I often felt excited at the possibility of locating mother-daughter groups to invite as collaborators but also overwhelmed at the thought of having to excavate archives, social networks, and perhaps the entire worldwide web to locate these groups when I was not even sure they existed outside the confines of my own family.³⁴

Much to my surprise, on June 13, 2017, as the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) campus readied itself for the 2016–2017 graduation season, UCLA Newsroom published an article titled, “Mother and Daughter Set to Graduate Together from UCLA” (Kendall, 2017). This article, which told a shorted educational history of Gabriela and Danielle Abraham, an undergraduate Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pair who graduated from UCLA,

³⁴ Refer to the Prologue for more information about my own motherscholar-daughterscholar narrative and for context on the Escobedo-Alvarez Educational Birthstory.

caught the attention of students, faculty, publicists, and community members alike. This article would be the first of many articles that I have identified which center a Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar academic success narrative. The story of Gabriela and Danielle Abraham inspired me to continue my search for Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar teams in an area that I had not yet explored: popular literature, specifically online and print newspaper articles.

A Google search³⁵ later revealed 44 distinct news articles about motherscholar-daughter pairs who graduated in the same year, from the same higher education institution, in the United States, between 2011 and 2018. More refined searches (which took place over the course of two years) using racial and ethnic identifiers would reveal several articles about mother-daughter dyads of numerous racial/ethnic backgrounds pursuing higher education at the same time.

Interesting enough, news articles centering Chicana/Latina dyads were the most abundant. For example, of the 44 distinct news articles I located which highlighted the stories of African American, Asian American, white, and Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pairs, reports about Chicana/Latina dyads made up 43% of the articles selected (19 articles total). This 43% plurality reaffirmed to me the importance of further investigating Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar relationships from a scholarly point of view. Indeed, while stories about these mother-daughter groups are present in the popular literature, there is little to no theoretical, methodological, and empirical backing in the academic scholarship. Paying particular attention to how motherscholars and daughterscholars traverse through college by individually and jointly navigating home, school, and social contexts can help us understand how to best support these

³⁵ This search was conducted biannually, over the course of two years (from June 2016-June 2018). The last search was conducted on June 14, 2018.

women in their academic endeavors and beyond. Since this is absent in the academic scholarship, more research is warranted in this area of study.

Guiding Research Questions and Rationale

As a reminder to the reader, this study centers the teaching and learning practices that take place between Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars across a 50-year time span. I refer to these reciprocal practices of raced, gendered, and classed teaching and learning as motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies.³⁶ I am interested in understanding how Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who pursued college at times that overlapped understand their relationship to each other, and to the U.S. education system. This paired approach—examining the maternal and daughteral perspective—is a significant contribution to the field because it affords an opportunity to delineate similarities, contradictions, tensions, and areas of overlap that may come up in individual accounts. In order to investigate these complexities, I am guided by two overarching research questions (RQ). Both RQs call for an examination of dual perspectives.

Research Question 1

What are the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college between the 1970s and 2020s?

Rationale for Question 1

This is the primary question guiding the study. Since limited research exists which examines the raced, gendered, classed, individual, *and* joint experiences of motherscholars and

³⁶ The pedagogies Chicana/Latina MS and Chicana/Latina DS cultivate as they navigate higher education. The tool of Chicana/Latina MS-DS pedagogies allows us to examine how Chicana/Latina scholars navigate higher education while disrupting cultural boundaries inside and outside of the Academy.

daughterscholars across fields and disciplines of study, this question calls on us to unpack the ways mothers and daughters make sense of their educational journeys at large, and how they do so in relation to one another. Integrating a maternal and daughter relationship component into the research question leads me to adopt an intersectional and intergenerational lens as I examine the educational life experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars.

Research Question 2

What are the pedagogies the motherscholars and daughterscholars developed and imparted to one another as they navigated higher education?

Rationale for Question 2

The first question calls for an examination of the raced, gendered, classed, and educational experiences, and the second question compliments RQ1 because it identifies and affirms the raced and gendered socialization process, and the teaching and learning practices that take place between mothers and daughters. Thus, RQ2 allows me to frame complex mother-daughter experiences within a motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies paradigm. Much like RQ1, RQ2 is significant because it reifies the dyadic and intergenerational nature of the study.

Taken together, these guiding research questions allow me to fill in some of the theoretical, empirical, and methodological gaps related to the (higher) educational plight of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars. I argue, understanding the heterogeneity within the Chicana/Latina demographic, particularly the complexities of motherscholar and daughterscholar experiences, heeds the call for conducting research with this considerably resilient, yet invisible, population. I further argue, forming a basis for future scholarly research on the educational trajectories of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters can lead to influencing educational policies and practices designed to support this distinct student population.

Forward: A Roadmap of the Dissertation

In the previous chapter, the Prologue, I explained why it is important to do Chicana/Latina mother-daughter research and I shared my personal connection to this study. In this chapter, I presented the educational status of Chicanas/Latinas in the U.S. to emphasize the importance of conducting research that examines their educational trajectories. I introduced scholarship which affirms the significant role that Chicana/Latina mothers play in the education of their children (namely their daughters). Moreover, I noted the important role that young and adult children (namely daughters) play in inspiring their mothers to move forward with their post-secondary studies. I then made a case for the study of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars by referencing academic scholarship, but also by pointing to online newspaper articles. Finally, I outlined my guiding research questions and provided context for them. This introduction sets the tone for the rest of the dissertation.

In Chapter Two, I examine the academic scholarship further to construct a Critical Race Feminista Review of Literature. In the Review of Literature, I detail several key concepts that will be used throughout the study such as: educación, pedagogy, families, mothers, and daughters. In the next chapter (Chapter Three) I outline the methods and methodology used to inform the research.

Following this are four findings chapters (Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven) which collectively make up the Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory. Across the four-chapter birthstory, I examine the educational life experiences of twenty two Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars during three historical time periods: (a) the 1960s to 1970s, (b) 1980s to 1990s, and (c) the 2000s to 2020s. In Chapter Four, I initiate a discussion about the educational life experiences of a Chicana/Latina motherscholar-

daughterscholar pair who attended college jointly in the 1960s–1970s and I designate the 1973 as the birth of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena in the United States. In the following chapter (Chapter Five), I examine the 1980s and 1990s time span to shed light on the motherscholars’ early college experiences. In Chapters Six and Seven, I began a discussion about the daughters’ individual educational journey throughout the 2000s to 2010s, and I speak on the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s–2020s. In Chapter Nine, I offer recommendations for developing programming, policies, practices, and research centered around the needs of Families and Students of Color with Dependents. I conclude this dissertation with the Epilogue. In this final chapter, framed as a love letter to my research collaborators, I summarize my research findings and present them in a way that (I believe) is accessible and digestible for multiple audiences.

A Cautionary Note on Romanticizing the Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Birthstory

Before I proceed, I would like to note that this birthstory is not crafted as a romanticized, feel-good tale about Chicana/Latina mother-daughter relationships. Rather, it is a complex narrative about Chicana/Latina mother-daughter struggle, resistance, love, and healing that transcends between generations of women who attended college individually and jointly. As we will soon learn, joyous recollections of collaboration and mother-daughter successes are focal points in the birthstory narrative. However, embedded into these stories are also painful memories which are, as I colloquially say of my personal experience, “not so pretty.” While I *do not* intend to romanticize the motherscholar-daughterscholar relationship, I *do*, unveil and honor the beauty that emerges from my research collaborators’ individual and collective struggles. In order to do this, I lean into Villenas and Moreno’s (2001) theorization of Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies and I remind readers that motherscholar-daughterscholar relationships are,

“wrought with tensions and contradictions yet open with spaces of possibility” (p. 673). Indeed, in these contested spaces, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars learn to reconcile their fragmented identities by growing, learning, and thriving in unexpected ways.

CHAPTER TWO: A CRITICAL RACE FEMINISTA LITERATURE REVIEW

I search for “theory” that can express the possibilities of mother-daughter and mujer oriented or womanist pedagogies of the borderlands, theories that might capture these fleeting embodied reinventions of teaching and learning across generations and between hierarchies of difference.

(Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 151)

This chapter reviews scholarship related to Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education and Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory (CLFT), the epistemological and theoretical foundations grounding this study. It synthesizes existing literature so that it speaks to five themes connected to the educational experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars in the United States. Categorizing the literature thematically affords an opportunity for me to paint a more vivid portrait of Chicana/Latina education as it relates specifically to the racialized and gendered experiences of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters navigating higher education at times that overlapped.

This chapter is broken down in five sections but organized around four themes. In the first section, I operationalize key terms that I use throughout this dissertation; these include educación, pedagogy, family, mothers, and daughters. I then review existing scholarship by offering the following: Theme 1, a discussion on literature regarding familial involvement; Theme 2, an examination of racial socialization literature and Critical Race Parenting scholarship; Theme 3, a discussion regarding culturally specific understandings of education as it manifests in the everyday lives of Chicana/Latina women; and Theme 4, scholarship related to Borderlands discourse. Within each thematic sections, I define key ideas related to topic of interest.

The methodological design of this study is informed by Critical Race and Chicana/Latina Feminist traditions and my consideration of existing scholarship is no different. I situate this

review of literature in a Critical Race Feminista Praxis (CRFP; Delgado Bernal & Aleman, 2017; Delgado Bernal et al., 2018) by examining scholarship that emerges from and/or is informed by Critical Race and Chicana/Latina Feminist camps. A CRFP can be understood as “an anticolonial praxis that [braids] together critical race theories (CRTs) and Anzaldúan Chicana feminist theories to inform both our scholarly and political sensibilities” (Delgado Bernal & Aleman, 2017, p. 21). While I acknowledge a wide reach of scholarship exists about Chicana/Latina scholars outside of CRT and CLFT traditions, I am very particular about whom I cite in this literature synthesis. Delgado Bernal (1998) reminds us, “whose work gets cited matters because it significantly contributes to what and whose knowledge is legitimated.” Thus, I make an intentional effort to highlight scholarship that centers Woman, Mothers, Daughters, and Scholars of Color. I reaffirm my commitment to this praxis by titling the chapter A Critical Race Feminista Review of Literature. In the next section, I offer a discussion about the nexus of race, gender, socioeconomic status, motherhood, daughterhood, pedagogies, and education while operationalizing terms that undergird this research with this praxis in mind.

Grounding the Study: Operational Definitions

Educación and Pedagogy

This research examines teaching and learning processes that develop between Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters. For this reason, I situate the study in a very distinct operationalization of education. Privileging holistic and moral education alongside traditional interpretations of formal schooling, I understand “Chicanas’ everyday experiences and practices of teaching, learning, and communal ‘knowing’ as *educación*” (Villenas et al., 2006, p. 2). As I have previously noted, for Chicana/o and Latina/o families, the concept of *educación*³⁷ means

³⁷ Educación translates to education.

more than just education in the limiting, Western sense of formalized schooling. Instead, *educación* encompasses a broader understanding of education which posits Chicana/o and Latina/o children draw on familial and cultural knowledges passed down from previous familial generations to inform decision making in the everyday (Valdés, 1996).

My research collaborators will agree with scholars who argue *educación* is transmitted fluidly such that teaching, and learning occurs multidirectional (i.e., from mother to child, from child to mother, from sibling to sibling, from child to grandparent), not unidirectionally (i.e., from parent to child). These inter/intrafamilial and inter/intragenerational exchanges often occur outside the context of schools. Though educational researchers have traditionally privileged schools as a primary site for the study of learning and development opportunities to become *educada/o*³⁸ are not bound to classrooms or institutions. Much like Delgado Bernal and colleagues (2006):

[re-envision] the sites of pedagogy to include women's brown bodies and their agency articulated on the church steps, the university cafeteria, and in the intimate spaces where *mujer-to-mujer* conversations are whispered. We look to these different, yet ordinary, sites of knowledge construction with the hope of proposing different possibilities and theories of pedagogy, epistemology, and education—indeed *mujer*-centered articulations of teaching and learning, along with ways of knowing—rooted in the diverse and everyday living of Chicanas/Latinas as members of families, communities, and a global society.” (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006, p. 3)

Within this framing, pedagogies developed and enacted in spaces like the home “represent a teaching and learning approach based on wholeness, harmony, social justice, and liberation” (Rendón, 2009, p. 137). Not an approach grounded exclusively in western notions of rationality and the pursuit of academic knowledge.

Additionally, I examine the strategies by which Mothers and Daughters of Color impart

³⁸ *Educada/o* translates to educated.

educación to one another through the sharing of mujer-oriented pedagogies. Villenas and Moreno (2001) refer to “the teaching and learning that occurs between mothers and daughters of color” (p. 673) as mother-daughter pedagogies. Throughout this dissertation, I argue that mother-daughter teaching and learning experience encompass raced and gendered socialization practices that carry with them a motive to educate, or educar.³⁹ These lessons are imparted by means of verbal communication, but they are also nurtured and transmitted through embodied actions (Villenas, 2006). In other words, it is in doing, and not always only in speaking, that mothers and daughters do the most teaching and learning (Flores, 2016). Since this study centers the educational life experiences of women whose identities as mothers, daughters, and scholars overlap (i.e., motherscholars and daughterscholars), I am called to engage a broad analysis of their teaching and learning practices. Operationalizing educación and pedagogy within these framings allows me to re-envision traditional interpretations of teaching and learning to include the diverse forms of critical pedagogy that Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters develop in various spaces, as they navigate higher education concurrently. Moreover, this culturally informed understanding of education pushes me to further theorize how mothers and daughters’ bodies, as pedagogical devices, can foster a development of the holistic self.

Family, Mothers, and Daughters

This dissertation challenges traditional definitions of family, and by extension, normative definitions of Mothers and Daughters of Color. Black Feminist and Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Dr. Patricia Hill Collins (2009), describes traditional views about families as units:

Formed through a combination of blood ties, “normal” families should consist of heterosexual, racially homogenous couples who produce their own biological children.

³⁹ Educar translates to educate.

Such families should have a specific authority structure, namely a father-head earning an adequate family wage, a stay-at-home wife and mother, and children. (p. 53)

In this study, families are understood beyond a biological construct and are inclusive of community-based familial networks. Collins (2009) reminds us that in African American and Chicana/Latina families (Caballero et al., 2017, 2019), women are often reared through women-centered communities made up of birthmothers, othermothers,⁴⁰ birthdaughters, and otherdaughters.⁴¹ These women-centered networks provide support, nourishment, and education for women who make up the family. With regards to the distribution of motherwork⁴², the traditional family might assign mothering responsibilities of sustaining a nuclear family household to birthmothers, but othermothers might support biological mothers in this endeavor. In other words, birthmothers might rely on the women-centered familial networks to help raise children, especially daughters. Grandmothers, aunts, older siblings, and cousins might also assume some of these othermothering responsibilities (Caballero et al., 2017, 2019; Collins, 2009; Santos & Crowe Morey, 2013).

Integral to this mujer-oriented network is the support of daughters. Much like mothers, hijas⁴³ might rely on the women-centered networks to help care for and support the nuclear and extended family (birthmothers and othermothers included). I argue, similar to the way mothering

⁴⁰ As a reminder to the reader, the term Othermother(s) used throughout this paper refers to “women who assist birthmothers by sharing mothering responsibilities” (Collins, 2009, p. 192).

⁴¹ As a reminder to the reader, I use the term otherdaughter(s) used throughout this paper is informed by Patricia Hill Collins (2009) and makes a reference to women who share and reciprocate daughtering/daughterwork responsibilities. Otherdaughters may not necessarily be related biologically, but it is possible for them to be related through blood ties.

⁴² The Chicana M(other)work Collective asserts, “Chicana M(other)work is care work which includes the care we do in our home, classroom, communities, and with ourselves . . . Moreover, Chicana M(other)work is expansive and intergenerational. It is expansive because we do not mother alone when we have help from partners, relatives, or friends. It is intergenerational because it includes the histories of our Chicana and Mexicana abuelas, mothers, tías, and sisters” (Caballero et al., 2017, p. 63).

⁴³ Hijas translates to daughters.

responsibilities are distributed, daughtering⁴⁴ responsibilities might also be shared. In other words, daughters in these familial networks might not necessarily be related biologically but can still be considered what I call otherdaughters. Like birth daughters, otherdaughters take on responsibilities of supporting birthmothers and othermothers in sustaining the family. When we consider the intersecting roles and identities *mujeres* undertake in Families of Color, we note a communal sharing of responsibilities. This community-based understanding of motherhood and daughterhood allows me to consider how mothers, daughters, sisters, and other *femmes* engage in carework by nurturing and socializing (new and older) generations on a communal and reciprocal basis.

Critical Race scholar Dr. Tara Yosso (2005) offers a definition of extended family which captures this kinship dynamic. Yosso coins the term familial capital, positing it (among other capitals⁴⁵) as a source of wealth prominent in Communities of Color:

those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition (see Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002). This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Acknowledging the racialized, classed and heterosexualized inferences that comprise traditional understandings of ‘family’, familial capital is nurtured by our ‘extended family’, which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who we might consider part of our *familia*. (p. 79)

⁴⁴ I argue, Chicana/Latina daughterwork/daughtering encompasses “care work which includes the care [daughters] do in the home, classroom, communities, and with [themselves] . . . Moreover, Chicana/Latina [daughterwork/daughtering] is expansive and intergenerational. It is expansive because we do not [daughter] alone when we have help from partners, relatives, or friends. It is intergenerational because it includes the histories of our Chicana and Mexicana abuelas, mothers, tías, and sisters” (Caballero et al., 2017, p. 63).

⁴⁵ The six sources of Community Cultural Wealth as they are explicated in Yosso (2005) include: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital. Yosso argues that these capitals are not mutually exclusive; rather they complement each other, and they serve as the tools for academic, personal, and professional success. Familial capital is most explored in this dissertation.

This framing of familia⁴⁶ is significant for this study because it allows for a more inclusive definition of familia. Moreover, this definition prompts me to affirm that in Families of Color, “kin model lessons of caring, coping, and providing (*educación*), which inform our emotional, moral, educational, and occupational consciousness” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). We can understand the willingness of mothers, daughters, and mujeres to support one another as a strategy Families of Color use to: (a) empower one another, (b) advocate for the survival of the family, (c) cope and resist oppression, and (d) socialize one another to become bien educadas⁴⁷ (Collins, 1994; Flores, 2016; Yosso, 2006). Therefore, the construction of women-centered familial networks is necessary for the survival of Families of Color who endure racialized, gendered, and socioeconomic oppression, especially in the context of Western schooling (Collins, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2006).

Taken together, Yosso’s (2005) definition of family, coupled with my conceptualizations of motherhood and daughterhood move me to acknowledge the ways Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters teach and learn from one another (educate and exchange pedagogies) as a strategy for subverting various societal oppressions. These guiding concepts—*educación*, pedagogy, mothers, daughters, and familia—help me situate the experiences of the Chicana/Latina women in a broader and more inclusive context of educational development. These central ideas, informed by CLFT and CRT, shape how I understand and approach the study of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars in higher education.

(Re)Centering Mothers and Daughters in Studies about Chicana/Latina Education

Understanding the state of Chicana/Latina educational attainment is not a new research

⁴⁶ Familia translates to family.

⁴⁷ Bien educada translates to well-educated.

interest. In fact, since the 1960s, Chicana/Latina students, activists, and scholars have advocated for a systematic study of Chicana/Latina history as it relates specifically to pursuits of educational equity (Cuádriz, 2005). Most notable is the work by Dr. Patricia Gándara (1972), “Passing Through the Eye of the Needle: High Achieving Chicanas,” a study based on a cohort of 17 low-income, high-achieving Chicanas/Latinas who graduated with M.D., J.D., or Ph.D. degrees. In her study, Gándara found that parents and siblings played important roles in the lives of the Chicana/Latina scholar-professionals. These family members offered the women unrelenting levels of emotional support while they pursued their education and they aided in socializing the women to cultivate a strong work ethic. Most striking, however, is a study finding which elevates the significance of Chicana/Latina mother-daughter relationships.

Though Gándara (1972) conceptualizes family and motherhood using traditional interpretations of these constructs (i.e., familial and motherhood relations sustained through biologically ties), she found, of all the individuals whom the women reported as supporting their academic endeavors, the participants’ biological mothers played especially influential roles in advocating for their daughters’ academic success. This finding is important because it strongly refutes deficit and stereotypic notions of the “passive” and “homebound” Chicana/Latina woman (Cuádriz, 2005). As such, Gándara’s (1972) work reaffirms the importance of “paying attention to mature women and mothers in our families and communities who are central to their children’s socialization and to community processes of empowerment” (Delgado Bernal, 2006, p. 2).

Studies written after “Passing Through the Eye of the Needle” have attempted to both characterize and analyze the higher educational plight of Chicana/Latina women by investigating the particularized ways Chicana/Latina mothers influence their daughters’ college-going behaviors. However, this line of inquiry is traditionally framed around discussions which assess

the involvement of Latina/o and Chicana/o families and parents in their children's education. Such is the case with Guadalupe Valdés' (1996) canonical ethnographic work with Mexican families which the discourse on Latina/o and Chicana/o parental involvement. In her research, Valdés (1996) showcases how teachers perceive Mexicana/o parents and their academic involvement to broaden our understanding of the nexus of school and home life. Valdés found that Mexicana/o parents (mothers in particular) felt as though educators and school personnel mistook their limited involvement in schools for a disregard for formal education. However, Valdés (1996) challenged this limited perception about western norms of educating by positioning Latina/Mexicana mothers as possessors, holders, and producers of knowledge who develop and utilize alternative forms of teaching in the home.

Much like Gándara's (1972) research, Valdés's (1996) work was amongst the first to use an asset-based lens to honor the various ways Chicana/Latina mothers impart knowledge to their daughters for the purposes of educational mobility and academic success. Taken together, both piece of scholarship move us to consider how forms of Chicana/Latina knowledge derive from more than one source: (a) home knowledges that were passed on by older familial generations, and (b) formal education. Moreover, this research has shaped present discussions about Latina/o and Chicana/o familial involvement. In order to provide more context for this next line of inquiry, I move to reviewing familial involvement literature.

Theme 1: Considering the Research on Familial Involvement

Researchers agree, Latina/o and Chicana/o familial influence, in the form of school involvement, plays a significant role in shaping students' educational experiences (Delgado Gaitan, 1990, 1991, 1994; Valdés, 1996). However, mainstream discussions about familial involvement are limited because they typically privilege a Eurocentric and middle-class standard

of involvement positing engagement as “how parents involve themselves in school affairs with or without the prompting of teachers or administrators” (Christianakis & Mora, 2013, p.155). This form of involvement typically privileges instrumental⁴⁸ support over emotional⁴⁹ support, positioning instrumental support as that which is most effective for fostering higher education persistence and enrollment (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). There are numerous assertions in the scholarly literature and popular press which reinscribe the belief that Latina/o and Chicana/o families, particularly of low-socioeconomic status (SES) and of Mexican descent, do not value education (Valdés, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). The basis for the myth that Mexican Americans do not value education stems from the general model of deficit thinking, and from limited understandings about what is a legitimate form of familial involvement (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Moreover, this assertion is connected to the belief that Families of Color “fail to inculcate this value in their children via academic socialization, and seldom participate in parental involvement activities in their home or the school” (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 82). Valencia and Black (2002) outline this argument:

The argument goes as follows: Given that Mexican Americans (allegedly) do not hold education high in their value hierarchy, this leads to inadequate familial socialization for academic competence, which in turn contributes to the school failure of Mexican American children and youth. (p. 83)

While this assertion has traditionally dominated the research cannon, more recent scholarship has begun to refute deficit-based paradigms about Latina/o and Chicana/o families by demonstrating the contrary. In fact, given the growing number of communities represented socially, politically, and academically throughout the United States, researchers have started looking at family

⁴⁸ Instrumental support is understood as providing material aid and tangible assistance in the form of financial and behavioral assistance (Malecki & Demaray, 2003).

⁴⁹ Emotional support is understood as providing feelings of love and trust, social companionship, listening support and reliable alliance (Malecki & Demaray, 2003).

involvement from a multiethnic and multicultural point of view, rather than a monolithic stance. With regards to the study of Latina/o and Chicana/o families, researchers have narrowed their gaze to assess how mujer-oriented familial networks support Chicana/Latina scholars throughout their educational journeys.

For example, we note that scholars often highlight how Chicana/Latina mothers and siblings participate in K-12 educational systems by taking on roles as educational advocates who provide emotional and instrumental support (Gándara, 1995; Gándara & Contreras, 2010; Gándara et. al, 2013). Though it is not clear if the mothers in the studies are formally educated or (even motherscholars themselves), the literature stresses that Chicana/Latina mothers provide instrumental support by reading to young daughters, providing homework help to daughters during their K-12 journeys, and creating a college-going culture in the home (Ceballo, 2004; Gándara, 1995; Yosso, 2005).

As a case in point, Ortega (2006) researches the academic persistence of Latinas in higher education by centering the mother-daughter relationship. To understand overall perceptions of familial involvement as is understood in terms of maternal support, she surveyed 59 first generation college going Latina women pursuing their undergraduate degree at Arizona State University (ASU). Ortega's study is unique in that more than half of her research participants (36 of 59 research collaborators) were affiliated with the Hispanic Mother Daughter Program (HMDP) at ASU⁵⁰, an "early-outreach middle and high school program designed to increase the

⁵⁰ As Ortega (2006) explicates, student and family participation in the HMDP begins in the 8th grade and requires the involvement of mothers or maternal caregivers. For more information about the Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program at Arizona State University, please visit their webpage at <https://eoss.asu.edu/hmdp>.

number of first-generation Arizona students who are qualified and prepared to enroll at Arizona States University through direct family involvement” (Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program, n.d.).

Ortega’s (2006) dissertation is also significant because it is the first and only published research study, to my knowledge, that documents the experiences of young Latina students who progress through the educational pipeline with support from their mothers and from a mother-daughter academic support program sponsored by an institution of higher learning (in this case, HMDP at ASU). Though not all the study participants were affiliated with the HMDP, Ortega makes a valuable contribution to the literature by complicating our understanding of maternal involvement. Her study further contributes to our empirical and methodological understanding of Latina maternal support and its role in fostering academic persistence for young Latina college students because it incorporates a mixed methods approach. For example, using quantitative hypothesis testing, she finds there was no statistical difference in terms of perceived maternal support when comparing reports about perceived maternal support from Latina students who participated in the HMDP, and those who did not participate in the program. However, it is important to note that Ortega’s (2006) findings are limited because they often ascribe to narrow interpretations of familial involvement (i.e., offering instrumental support as a result of participation in HMDP). As I noted earlier, familial involvement is so much more than providing material aid and tangible assistance. Indeed, Chicana/Latina mothers also involve themselves in their daughters’ educational endeavors by offering emotional support and encouragement at home through the imparting of home knowledges and cultural narratives.⁵¹

Maria Ana Rodriguez’s (2012) continues the discussion about cultural narratives in her

⁵¹ Cultural narratives are myths, folktales, dichos, consejos, autobiographical stories, and storytelling shared between family members (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Rodriguez, 2012).

dissertation. Broadly speaking, her research examines Latino familial involvement considering relationships and communication patterns that take place between (biologically related) Latina mothers and daughters. More specifically, she studies mother-daughter relationships to better understand how cultural narratives affect Latina daughter's education attainment and sense of resiliency. By triangulating data gathered from focus groups, in-depth interviews, and observations with mothers and daughters, Rodriguez finds that cultural narratives are the most common forms of communication between mothers and daughters. Rodriguez makes the case that cultural narratives serve as pedagogical tools that increase daughter's educational attainment and sense of resiliency in school and beyond. Indeed, teaching cultural values, life lessons, and experiential learning become non-traditional forms of family involvement. However, left out of her research is a discussion on the possible involvement practices that othermothers (such as sisters) engage in to support daughterscholars in their academic pursuits.

Though they are typically not considered othermothers in the familial involvement literature (a stark contrast from this dissertation), another component of mujer-oriented familial involvement considers the role of sisters. For example, familial involvement research will stress when mothers cannot provide instrumental information regarding the logistics of college enrollment, siblings who have already navigated the college process serve as key resources for facilitating their sisterscholars'⁵²/daughterscholars' undergraduate enrollment and persistence (Gándara et.al, 2013). In this way, older siblings (especially, older sisters) that have gone to college play a key role in daughterscholars' educational pursuits (González et al., 2003).

⁵² Similar to the terms motherscholar (Matias & Nishi, 2018) and daughterscholar, I argue, the term sisterscholar refers to Chicana/Latina women who presently, or at one point in their lives, identified as Chicanas/Latinas, sisters, and scholars simultaneously. Sisterscholars do not engage in scholarship, without engaging their roles as sisters inasmuch, as they also engage their roles as scholars, daughters, and in some instances, mothers.

Sisterscholars and othersisterscholars⁵³ not only provide emotional support leading up to college enrollment, but also provide privileged information that has the potential to yield tangible and material results in the form of college enrollment, persistence, and graduation (González et al., 2003).

Grimaldo (2010) sheds light on the impactful role of older sisters and mothers in her dissertation work which explores the educational histories of three familial generation of women who achieved academic success in rural West Texas. Specifically, she demonstrates how each generation of women played a key role in “[fostering] growth, agency, dignity, identity formation, good will and empowerment” (xiv). By looking inward and examining her own family’s educational history, Grimaldo challenges us to rethink (a) our perceptions of familial involvement and (b) our understanding of generation status. That is, she leads us to pay particular attention to how (older) sisters (the second familial generation) in conjunction with mothers (the first familial generation), impact the educational trajectories of college-going daughterscholars (the second familial generation, but first college generation). I, like Grimaldo, would argue though they technically are not parents, sisters serve as caregivers and othermothers who rear young daughterscholars to push forward in their pursuit of higher learning in spite of real or perceived barriers to educational success. Because of this caregiving practice and of the responsibility they have to siblings, I would argue that sisters are individuals with dependents as well.

Evidently, the extensive work on Latino/Chicano familial involvement has shaped larger discourses regarding the strategies Chicana/Latina mothers and sisters draw on to support their

⁵³ I argue, much like sisterscholars, othersisterscholars engaging their roles as othersisters who share sistering responsibilities inasmuch, as they also engage their roles as scholars, daughters, and in some instances, mothers.

daughterscholars/sisterscholars' academic ambitions. However, it becomes clear that the familial involvement scholarship makes a case for, and privileges involvement strategies that foster the acquisition of academic-based knowledge, as opposed to holistic education. This has consequently reinforced limited ideas about what constitutes education, rendering the literature on this topic incomplete.

Another significant limitation in the familial involvement literature is related to narrow perceptions about motherhood, scholarhood, and their possible intersections. Often, research on familial involvement positions Chicana/Latina daughters as students who receive emotional or instrumental support on behalf of their mothers and/or sisters. Rarely, if ever, does this line of research consider the possibility that Chicana/Latina mothers are students as well who might receive reciprocal support from their daughterscholars. Across fields, Motherscholar of Color experiences have long been disregarded within education literature, particularly in discussions around familial involvement (Télez, 2015). Thus, the work on familial involvement reinforces narrow ideas about what Mothers of Color “look” like, and deficit perceptions (though perhaps not intentionally) about the allegedly uneducated Chicana/Latina mother.

Despite these limitations, scholarship on familial involvement is significant because it allows me to make an explicit connection between schooling and family. However, “schooling” per se, is not at the core of this research. Instead, this dissertation examines the ways motherscholars and daughterscholars navigate higher education spaces while they learn from one another in exchanging raced and gendered socialization practices. Better said, this dissertation considers how motherscholars and daughterscholars engage in raced and gendered socialization practices through the cultivation of motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies, as they become educadas through formal schooling channels, and beyond. For this reason, the scholarship on

familial involvement informs this work from a periphery; but the literature on familial racial and gendered socialization shapes this dissertation more explicitly. Throughout this dissertation, I draw on language and concepts grounded in racial, gendered, and cultural socialization scholarship, but reference familial involvement literature because it helps me to better characterize involvement types (i.e., instrumental and emotional support). Now that I summarized the literature on familial involvement, I review the literature on raced and gendered familial socialization.

Theme 2: Racial and Gender Familial Socialization Research

As I have noted previously, I center scholarship that specifically details the ways motherscholars and daughterscholars engage in socialization exchanges in the form of motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies. To do this, I draw on work that considers how Chicanas/Latinas engage in pedagogical exchanges along racial, gendered, cultural, and academic lines. As I explain in this section, the literature on racial socialization pushes me to consider how Mothers of Color impart race-conscious education to their daughters, while the scholarship around Critical Race Parenting allows me to investigate how children impart race-based education to their mothers. The scholarship produced by Chicana/ Latina Feminists complements that of Critical Race Parenting by adding a gendered analysis of the multidirectional teaching and learning that occurs between Mothers and Daughters of Color. I take an intersectional approach in this research because I believe Chicana/Latina “mother-daughter pedagogies involve the dilemma of how to teach racial/ethnic daughters to ‘fit into systems of oppression’ so as to ensure survival, but also to teach them *not* to become willing participants in their own subordination” (Collins, 1994, p. 23). With this in mind, I move to describe research that centers the racial, gendered, cultural, and academic socialization processes

informing Chicana/Latina educational experiences.

Familial Racial Socialization

Socialization refers to the processes by which individuals learn and internalize the norms, customs, and values that are important to a particular community. For Families, Mothers, and Children of Color, fostering a sense of critical racial socialization is vital for the survival of the family, but also for educational excellence (Delgado Bernal, 2018; Solórzano, 1998; Stevenson, 2014; Yosso, 2005) because race, racism, and intersection with other forms of oppression impacts their everyday experiences (Solórzano, 1998; Stevenson, 2014). Rearing Children and Youth of Color to navigate oppressive societal institutions, schools included, is one way to promote a positive racial identity amidst a racist climate that harbors contrary belief systems (Collins, 2009; Lorde, 2007; Tatum, 1997). By drawing on their awareness of race, gender, and other cultural factors, Mothers and Daughters of Color work to become educadas in navigating a racialized and gendered world. Their ability to draw on the lessons learned through their raced and gendered socialization tangentially influences their academic development (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano, 1998).

Scholars will agree, Children and Youth of Color experience socialization through exposure to communal memories, family conversations, parental teachings, school interactions, the media, and pop culture, to name a few (Delgado Bernal, 2018; Stevenson, 2014). As such, we can understand socialization as a process that is not only family-sanctioned, but also one acquired through exposure to various cultural and institutional locales. Across disciplines, parents are commonly positioned as children's "first teachers" (Flores Carmona, 2010). For this reason, much of the scholarship on racial socialization frames the socialization process as one facilitated by families at large, but by parents more particularly. Indeed, familial racial

socialization is inclusive of what parents intentionally communicate to children; how children internalize intentional, nonverbal, and unintentional messages from their parents' actions; and how children respond to their parents' messages (Stevenson, 2014).

Stevenson (2014) argues that one way familial racial socialization transcends within Communities of Color is through parents' facilitation of race conversations. In Black communities, mothers have what is commonly referred to as "The Talk," with their children. As Stevenson describes, "the talk" can be understood as survival education meant to help Black children develop an understanding of how certain racialized situations occur, why certain racial conditions exist, and how to handle these situations/conditions in and out of school settings. In his research on racial socialization and racial literacy, Stevenson finds that Black children are directly impacted by these racial teaching. That is, Black children take what they learn from their parents' race-teaching and respond to racially stressful situations by enacting race pedagogies. Solórzano and Pérez Huber (2020) might refer to these race-based and gendered instances of teaching as microaffirmations⁵⁴ (or as I might call them microaffirmative pedagogies) that inspire Children and Youth of Color to identify, process, and respond to racial microaggressions (Pérez-Huber et al., 2021; Pérez Huber & Huber-Verjan, 2019; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Solórzano et al., 2000; Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Yosso et al., 2009). Examples of racially microaffirmative pedagogies as they relate to this study might be the imparting of motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies, the sharing of cultural narratives, or the facilitation of Race Talks.

Along similar lines, Vivian Lee Dill (1998) explains that Latina mothers transmit

⁵⁴ Racial microaffirmations are "often subtle verbal and/or non-verbal strategies (moments of shared cultural intimacy) People of Color consciously engage that acknowledge and affirm each other's value, integrity, and shared humanity... [they are] a response to systemic everyday racism, such as racial microaggressions, in that they provide commonplace strategies to resist the subjugation of Communities of Color within the context of white supremacy," (Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020).

racialized and gendered life lessons to their children through their daily actions and rituals; these actions become “pedagogical” moments, or moments of teaching and learning. Delgado Bernal (2006) affirms that culturally based knowledges passed within and between generations from one mujer to another “can help us survive in everyday life by providing an understanding of certain situations and explanations about why things happen under certain conditions” (p. 114).

Though not necessarily part of the racial socialization cannon, Delgado Bernal’s (2001) pedagogies of the home framework adds another layer of complexity to our understanding of the raced and gendered socialization processes nurtured within woman-centered Families of Color. It moves us to consider how different markers of discrimination (e.g., race, immigration status, religious affiliation, sexuality, and language) impact Chicana/Latinas experiences (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Solórzano, 1998). Ultimately, these race-based pedagogies serve as sources of emotional support that help Scholars of Color overcome marginalization in primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational settings (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Villenas & Moreno, 2001). This then reaffirms the critical importance of family, community, and socialization tools they offer to Students of Color in the U.S.

All of the research that I just reviewed in this section can be understood in relation to Stevenson’s (2014) discussion the cycle of familial racial socialization. Stevenson does not include a visual model outlining his framework, but I created a model that attempts to capture the larger components of his research. I include this model here because it serves as a visual tool that I reference and adapt as the review of literature progresses.

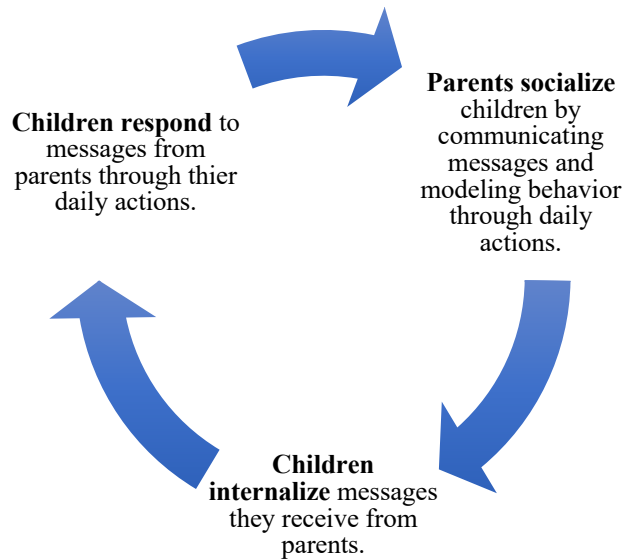


Figure 1. Racial Socialization and Racial Literacy Model (Stevenson, 2014).

Though racial and familial socialization literature—specifically Stevenson’s (2014) work—has made great strides in adding nuance to existing scholarship on familial socialization, I believe absent from this discussion is an examination of how parents subsequently internalize racialized messages, and respond to actions that result from their children’s racial socialization. In other words, Stevenson’s research does not consider how parents biologically related to one another experience raced and gendered socialization alongside, and because of interactions with their children. That is, the model does not consider how familial racialization socialization operates the other way around—from child to parent. Racial socialization and racial literacies, like the imparting of educación, is not developed nor is transmitted unidirectionally. Rather, parents are equally influenced by what and how they teach children, and what they learn from their children (Matias, 2016; Matias & Nishi, 2018; Nishi, 2018).

The case of the Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars attending college concurrently in this study prompts us to consider if and how mothers and daughters respond to multidirectional raced and gendered socialization. I believe that this socialization can take the

form of (a) engaging in race talk, developing and exchanging pedagogies of the home, or (c) some unique combination of both. Unfortunately, sparse is the literature which examines how mothers socialize their daughters to both appreciate and pursue higher education and how daughterscholars might respond to this socialization by then influencing mothers to pursue a post-secondary degree as well. Fortunately, the research on Critical Race Parenting has played a pivotal role in shaping the field of familial and racial socialization by shifting its focus away from examining only what parents intentionally teach to children, but also what parents learn from children as well (Matias, 2016; Matias & Nishi, 2018). Though research that investigates the cycle of parent to child socialization is scant, the research by Critical Race Parenting scholars helps to further theorize the reciprocal socialization that occurs within and between familial generations. The next section will build off the discussion on racial socialization by examining the literature on Critical Race Parenting.

Critical Race Parenting

Though in its early stages of development, Critical Race Parenting scholarship (ParentCrit) engages scholarly questions about what it means “to parent” while advocating for “an educational praxis that can engage both parent and child in a reciprocal process of teaching and learning about race” (Matias 2016, p. 3). In their epilogue to a special issue on Critical Race Parenting, Matias and Nishi (2018) state:

teaching your children right from wrong, educating them, providing for them, or modeling good behavior seem like a reasonable recipe for parenting. But, like Freire (1993) reminds us, teaching and learning must be reciprocal and not done in a banking style whereby the teacher is the only one depositing knowledge into the child. We then ask, is this view of parenting hegemonic, or even oppressive? When does the child teach the parent how to parent? Parenting, as we argue, involves as much learning on the part of the parent inasmuch as the child learns from us. (p. 84)

By challenging traditional beliefs regarding familial racial socialization and parenting, research by ParentCrit scholars pushes us to investigate further what it means for Families of Color to

engage in critical teaching and learning alongside one another. Certainly, the pedagogical philosophy of reciprocal learning that ParentCrit is founded on is not new (Freire 1993). But recognizing the explicit and agentic role that Children and Youth of Color play in shaping, and thereby educating parents in a reciprocal manner and calling that exchange “parenting,” is novel. ParentCrit scholarship make a valuable contribution to this study because it explicitly names a pedagogical praxis that was designed with the intention of dismantling and nuancing our understanding of oppressive hierarchies undergirding traditional ideas about how Parents and Children of Color (young and adult) educate one another.

Further theorizing parenting processes and strategies of parent-child socialization, in light of Critical Race Theory, is a research objective that this dissertation builds upon. For example, the present study looks at how college-going mothers and college-going daughters socialize one another to be conscious of, and responsive to various systems of oppressions (such as racism and sexism that occur both in the home and in school). Therefore, the conceptual tools of ParentCrit prompt me to further investigate how Chicana/Latina Motherscholars and Daughterscholars teach and learn from one another as they navigate the inherently oppressive social structure that is the U.S. academe. Moreover, ParentCrit challenges me to further theorize how mothers socialize their young and adult children to appreciate and pursue higher education and how young and adult daughters might then respond to this socialization by influencing their mothers to pursue a post-secondary degree as well. I argue, ParentCrit research builds on Stevenson’s (2014) racial socialization and racial literacy model by considering the perspectives of parents. In other words, ParentCrit research pushes us to think about how parents internalize messages they receive from children, and how they respond to messages they receive from, and behaviors they observe when engaging with their children. This model (adapted from Figure 1) and informed by

the existing scholarship, contributes to the work on familial racial socialization and Critical Race Parenting by considering parents' response to their children's actions. I include a visual representation of the parent to child racial socialization as it relates to this study. Figure 2 builds off Stevenson's (2014) model and extends Figure 1 by incorporating elements of Critical Race Scholarship.

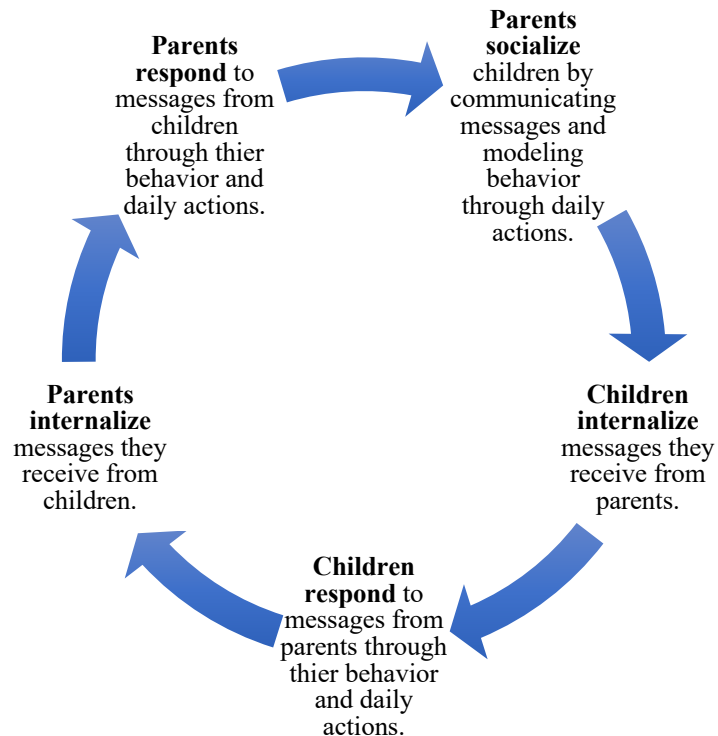


Figure 2. Parent-Child Racial Socialization and Racial Literacy (adapted from Stevenson [2014] and informed by Critical Race Parenting Scholarship).

Again, I would like to reiterate that this model is informed by the literature and has not yet been tested empirically. I argue, using the scholarship and this model to inform our thinking about the racial socialization exchanges that take place between Mothers and Daughters of Color, can help further research in this area. More specifically though, when coupled with CLFT, it can add a gendered analysis to our understanding about how Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters

engage in racialized and gendered socialization processes. In the next, I explain how Chicana/Latina Feminist literature prompts me to adapt this model once more as I “search for theory that can express the *possibilities* of mother-daughter and *mujer* oriented or womanist pedagogies of the borderlands, theories that might capture these fleeting embodied reinventions of teaching and learning across generations and between hierarchies of difference” (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p. 151).

Theme 3: Gendered & Cultural Socialization & Chicana/Latina Feminist Pedagogies

Now that I have contextualized familial racial socialization within a Critical Race Parenting framework, I build on this discussion by introducing Chicana/Latina Feminist scholarship. Understanding the literature on Chicana/Latina Feminist pedagogies is important for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of socialization practices that develop within Chicana/o and Latina/o families. As I detail in the paragraphs that follow, scholarship written by Chicana/Latina Feministas have creatively examined Chicana/Latina *mujer*-oriented pedagogies in different ways—be they presented in the form of autobiographical work, peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and doctoral dissertations. Much of this research is informed by a pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) framework and a Latina mother-daughter pedagogies paradigm (Villenas & Moreno, 2001). Though these studies may differ methodologically, conceptually, and/or with respect to the focal population, taken together, they challenge the literature on Chicana/Latina education to consider the unique experiences of Chicana/Latina daughterscholars and motherscholars.

Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory

Chicana/Latina Feminist theorists use a critical lens as they center their analysis on social, cultural, gendered, and educational perspectives of Chicanas/Latinas in the United States

(Anzaldúa, 2012; Delgado Bernal, 1998). Documented in the form of autobiographies, testimonios, oral histories, creative writings, empirical studies, and theoretical work, this line of research embodies a tradition of agency as it affirms Women, of Color have not passively accepted instance of oppression (Elenes et al., 2001). Rather, Women of Color have historically worked to disrupt hierarchies oppression by imparting to one another raced and gendered pedagogies. The line of inquiry also affirms that mothers have played an important role in helping daughters develop strategies of resistance that challenge educational norms and traditional views about Chicana/Latina scholars (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Gutiérrez et al., 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). For example, Elenes et al. (2001) write:

Mothers embody and teach the foundation for questioning and navigating the patriarchal traditions and constraints of socializing scripts through exemplary lessons based on their own life experiences. At the same time, they also cultivate in their children a vibrant sense of self. This kind of pedagogy instructs a channeling of female energy into self-direction/self-determination for living and practicing ethical standards, *respeto*, and *educación*. (p. 596)

Drawing on Chicana Feminist Epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998), Delgado Bernal (2001) refers to some of these familial support mechanisms as pedagogies of the home. Pedagogies of the home situate Woman of Color's everyday practices, contradictions, and teaching through *consejos* (wisdom passed on through advice), *respeto* (respect for elders and their knowledge), and *educación* (informal education that instills values morals, and cultural familial teaching, and also includes education based on lived experience) as the education that takes place in Latina/o homes (Elenes et al., 2001). Pedagogies of the home are inclusive:

the communication, practices, and learning that ... often serve as a cultural knowledge base that helps Chicana college students negotiate the daily experiences of sexist, racist, and classist microaggressions. Pedagogies of the home provide strategies of resistance that challenge the educational norms of higher education and the dominant perceptions held about Chicana students. (Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 624)

I would position pedagogies of the home as part of a larger resistance toolkit that Chicana/Latina

women draw on to inform their own lives (and those of others around them) as they navigate various societal locales, including college and university spaces.

Funds of Knowledge

Delgado Bernal's (2001) work on pedagogies of the home is related to funds of knowledge, the anthropology of education research that draws from the knowledge that is produced in the home (González, 2006; González et al., 1995; Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2018; Moll et al., 1992). Though it is not necessarily rooted in Chicana/Latina Feminist thought, the research on Funds of Knowledge prompts me to examine how Chicana/o and Latina/o students draw on the skills, beliefs, and practices nurtured in their home to inform their schooling experiences. González (1995) reminds us, research that draws on a Funds of Knowledge paradigm refutes deficit perceptions about historically marginalized communities, especially low-income and working-poor Chicana/o and Latina/o families by bridging schools and homes. Therefore, funds of knowledge, coupled with pedagogies of the home, serve as pedagogical tools that Mothers and Daughters of Color draw on as they navigate the U.S. schooling system.

Latina Mother-Daughter Pedagogies

Merging concepts within Chicana/Latina Feminist tradition with notions of educación, Villenas and Moreno (2001) add another dimension to the pedagogies of the home and funds of knowledge frameworks by centering the unique socialization practices that emerge from mother and daughter relationships. In their study about eleven Latina mothers in rural North Carolina, Villenas & Moreno (2001) explore the teaching and learning that occurs between mothers and daughters. Repositioning Chicana/Latina mothers from the margins to the center of educational research (Flores, 2016), they describe mother-daughter pedagogies as being transmitted through *consejos*, *cuentos* (sayings or proverbs), and *la experiencia* (experience) (Villenas & Moreno,

2001). Moreover, they find that mothers in the study instilled in daughters the ability to negotiate and challenge oppressive gender ideologies by transmitting cultural tools “to survive the system and to be able to move between race, capitalism, and patriarchy” (p. 685).

Villenas and Moreno’s (2001) study is significant because it challenges the discourse on Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). Whereas the Funds of Knowledge literature is concerned with addressing the sociocultural, linguistic, and intellectual resources that facilitate educational success for underrepresented students (Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2018), the concept of mother-daughter pedagogies adds a Chicana feminist sensibility by examining mujer-oriented funds of support. Mariella Espinoza-Herold (2007) does just this in her work with Chicana college students. Her study explores how mothers impart to daughters mujer-oriented Funds of Knowledge and finds that daughters learn important *dichos* from their mothers; these *dichos* allow for mothers to share cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs to support their daughters as they progress in their schooling. Positioning *dichos* as a tool of mother-daughter pedagogies is significant because it pushes forward the research on both Funds of Knowledge and Latina mother-daughter pedagogies, while adding complexity to the Chicana/Latina pedagogical toolkit.

Though Villenas and Moreno’s (2001) study is an invaluable contribution to the field, missing from the research is (a) an intergenerational analysis of multidirectional learning processes that take place between Chicana/Latina mothers, daughters, othermothers, and otherdaughters, (b) the voices of the daughterscholars, and (c) the perspectives of motherscholars. This dissertation seeks to fill in these gaps so as to capture a more comprehensive account of Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies. To do this, it builds on Villenas’s later work (Villenas, 2006), in addition to that of Hernandez et al. (1994), Espinoza-Herold (2007), Grimaldo (2010), and Flores (2016). These sources allow me to theorize the

intergenerational teaching and learning which takes places between mothers, othermothers (grandmothers and sisters) and daughterscholars in a way that captures the complexity of their relationships.

Extending the Discourse on Latina Mother-Daughter Pedagogies

Sophia Villenas (2006) builds on her initial conceptualization of mother-daughter pedagogies by including an intergenerational and performative component in her later work titled “*Pedagogical moments in the borderlands: Latina mothers and daughters teaching and learning.*” In the book chapter, Villenas reminds us that mother-daughter pedagogies are developed across familial generations. That is, mother-daughter pedagogies embody a form of intergenerational teaching and learning that operate within relatively new and old frames of reference (i.e., learning and teaching practices are observed by, and transmitted across generations of mothers). These pedagogies empower members of younger familial generations to dream beyond the present (Yosso, 2005), but also to merge old customs, beliefs, and value systems with more contemporary ways of being.

As a case and point, Villenas (2006) explains how the mothers who participated in her study frequently made a point to highlight the continuity in teaching and learning that took place between maternal figures across familial generations. Such was the case for Marisela, a mother who firmly believed, “her lifetime of experiences and interpretations of teaching and learning cannot be understood apart from the lives of her mother and grandmother” (p. 154). This finding reifies the point that researchers cannot fully understand mother-daughter pedagogies without taking a holistic approach that considers the intertwining lives of generations of mothers and daughters. As such, this dissertation seeks to examine intergenerational learning that occurs across familial generations (i.e., mothers, daughters, sisters, other family members). However, it

also seeks to examine how mother-daughter pedagogies develop across college generations (i.e., between first generation motherscholars and second generation daughterscholars). The second intention is an area of research that has yet to be explored.

In their 1994 study, Hernandez et al. center the narratives of a mother, daughter, and grandmother to make a case for a familial intergenerational analysis (though not necessarily an analysis of college-generation status). Their qualitative study analyzes interview and survey data to make sense of the development of intergenerational academic aspirations within a Mexican family. Much like the findings in Villenas and Moreno's (2001) and Villenas's (2006) research, Hernandez and colleagues found that the three generations of women in the study cited their mothers as having played an especially integral role in fostering their educational development and bolstering their academic aspirations. Indeed, the three familial generations of women who participated in the study were *bien educadas*⁵⁵ in terms of cultural and moral knowledges. However, only the woman of the third familial generation (the daughterscholar) was college educated and therefore, a first-generation college student. This suggests our understandings about daughterscholars and motherscholars is still incomplete. In other words, limited is our understanding of how maternal and daughteral figures help and socialize one another to develop educational aspirations with regards to pursuits of formal education, particular higher education. Regardless of this limitation, the work of Hernandez et al. reaffirms the (familial and college) generational component foundational to Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies.

Another significant component of Villenas's (2006) chapter relates to the performative aspect of mother-daughter pedagogies. Like the work of many Chicana/Latina Feminists,

⁵⁵ Bien educada translates to well-educated.

Villenas centers the body as an epistemological and pedagogical tool. Cruz (2001) reminds us it is imperative that researchers situate the female, brown body when considering Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies because mothers teach through their embodied or lived experiences. She explains, “The body is a pedagogical devise, a location of recentering and recontextualizing the self and the stories that emanate from that self” (p. 668). Therefore, “the body prompts memory and situates knowledges that can begin to validate the survival, transformation, and emancipation of our communities” (Flores, 2016, p. 26). In a similar vein, Villenas builds on this claim in her discussion about performative pedagogies. She articulates, “my mother^[SEP] performed the way of life or the way of teaching and learning that she grew up with and expected me to learn” (p. 148). That affirms that mothers and daughters learn not only from what is expressed explicitly, but also from what is not said and what is observed. We can understand this teaching from the body to be a vehicle that facilitates the development and sharing of mother-daughter pedagogies.

Though the concept of performative pedagogies challenges us to consider how learning can be expressed through the body, it also challenges us to thinking about how pedagogies are shared through the observation of feelings, actions, and rituals. In other words, sometimes lessons learned from what is observed or performed, are more impactful than those learned from what is communicated orally. Flores (2016) argues:

The incongruent and silent practices of our Mexicana/Chicana mothers often lead to difficult contradictions to understand. But it is often in doing and perhaps not speaking that we learn powerful lessons from our mothers, especially when experiences are too painful to disclose. (p. 51)

Indeed, this line of inquiry helps to explain how the motherscholars and daughterscholars in this study encompass and practice pedagogical tools from the flesh (Moraga, 2002) as they navigate higher education space. I turn to Flores’s (2016) dissertation work to help me conceptualize this

further.

Dr. Alma Itzé Flores (2016) theorizes Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies by exploring how 10 immigrant working-class mothers disciplined an awareness of the body, mind, and spirit to raise their daughters who were in Ph.D. programs, or professors, to be *muxeres truchas*.⁵⁶ In her study, Flores utilizes a *Muxerista Portraiture* methodology with the mother-daughter dyads and reveals that the young scholars developed a “subaltern *muxerista* form of achievement and intelligence” (p. 7) with support from their mothers. Much like the mothers in North Carolina (Villenas & Moreno, 2001), the mothers in Flores’s study advocated for their daughters’ educational success in ways that strayed away from traditional discussions around parental involvement or familial racial socialization. In fact, Flores found that “the daughters talked more about the ways their mothers taught them how to navigate oppression both within and outside of school, than the practices that are traditionally seen as fit for raising “smart kids” (i.e., reading, extracurricular activities)” (p. 7).

From a theoretical standpoint, Flores’s (2016) dissertation is significant because it explicitly highlights the oft overlooked narratives of working-class Mexicana/Chicana mothers who live in Los Angeles and who fight systematic oppressions alongside their high achieving daughterscholars in a way that mirrors many of the aforementioned studies. Moreover, she adds to our qualitative understanding of Mexicana/Chicana graduate student experiences by incorporating the perspectives of daughterscholars navigating the highest echelon of the higher education pipeline and beyond—namely, the doctorate and the professoriate. In my preliminary search for motherscholar-daughterscholar pairs,⁵⁷ I found that in many cases, at least one of the

⁵⁶ *Muxeres truchas* are “women who are not only smart in the traditional sense of education, but who also know how to navigate, thrive in, and transform systems of oppression” (Flores, 2016, p. 1).

⁵⁷ I explain this more in Chapter One.

two persons who make up a motherscholar-daughterscholar is a graduate student. Therefore, Flores's study informs the way that I analyze the educational life experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars who are working toward (or have already earned) graduate degrees. Finally, Flores pushes the methodological and epistemological boundaries of studying Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pairs through her careful development and utilization of Muxerista Portraiture (Flores, 2016, 2017).

Indeed, Flores's (2016) work has moved forward the study of Mexicana/Chicana mother-daughter pedagogies in numerous capacities but missing still is the perspective of motherscholars. That is, the question of mothering Chicana/Latina students who navigate higher educational alongside their daughters, is still undertheorized. A probable reason for this gap in knowledge relates to the invisibility of Motherscholars of Color in Academia.

Considering Motherscholars: Literature on Academic Mothers

Literature and research that centers the experiences of low-income, working-class Mothers of Color in academia is scant (Caballero et al., 2017, 2019; Téllez, 2015, Vega, 2019). As Alice Fothergill and Kathryn Feltey (2003) note, "The inclusion of women in academia as subjects of research on work and family/parenting has occurred only recently—and only in a limited way" (Lapayese, 2012, x). In fact, a survey of the literature published by and about academic mothers reveals that this scholarship remains largely focused on academic mothers who are white, straight, married/partnered, middle- and upper-class (Caballero et al., 2017, 2019; Téllez, 2015, Vega, 2019). Though the research reveals that more women are pursuing academic careers, becoming and navigating academia as a Mothering Student, particularly a Mothering Student of Color, is an arduous task.

Unfortunately, Motherscholars of Color experiences have long been disregarded within education scholarship. A significant cause for this invisibility relates to racist and sexist stereotypes surrounding Chicana/Latina mothers and mothers-to-be. Anaya (2011) affirms this when she states, “Women of Color experiences (i.e., graduate student Mothers of Color) are stifled on university and college campuses by the dominant, White culture’s socially constructed ideals of gender roles and ethnic/race assumptions” (p. 14). Corroborating this claim, in their 2017 article, The Chicana M(other)work Collective stresses the reality that is the systematic disenfranchisement of Women of Color MS on university campuses. They articulate:

The university is seldom held accountable for the exploitation faced by first-generation, low-income, and working-class Women of Color Mother-Scholars . . . these institutional barriers include, but are not limited to, (1) poverty-level stipends for graduate students, (2) exploitive wages for adjunct faculty, (3) unstable contingent employment, (4) little to no financial resources for childcare, (5) numerous unpaid service obligations, (6) conference presentations in non-child friendly locations with expensive registration and travel fees, and (7) the expectation to attend professional networking events that often conflict with childcare and school hours. (Caballero et al., 2017, p. 48)

Existing literature posits that Chicana/Latina motherscholars have made strides towards shifting deficit and racist discourses by defying traditional gender roles (e.g., delaying motherhood, avoiding domesticity) in their pursuit of higher education (Anaya, 2011). However, discourses that draw on deficit models to shame motherhood effectively erase the educational histories of Motherscholars of Color. I contend, in order to gain a more holistic account of Chicana/Latina education, researchers must also prioritize the scholarly study of Chicana/Latina motherscholars who pursue higher education with their daughters.

Though some scholarship exists, explicit discussions about Chicana/Latina Motherscholars of Color progressing through college concurrently are sparse in the academe. Indeed, the last decade has seen very few academic journals or conferences pertaining to motherhood and daughterhood. As an agentive response, individual Motherscholar of Color

Collectives have theorized about various issues related to motherhood and academia in several alternative presses⁵⁸. Reflecting on the robust presence of online information produced by and about motherscholars and daughterscholars, I too turned to the popular press to further theorize about motherscholar-daughterscholar educational trajectories. As such, I found that popular press literature, in the form of online news articles sponsored by higher educational institutions and community-based presses, have been especially integral for preserving motherscholar-daughterscholar narratives.

Theme 4: The Borderlands and Anzaldúan Chicana Feminist Research

In the previous sections, I outlined the current research centering Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars. In this section, I explain how Borderlands⁵⁹ discourse, as it is understood from an Anzaldúan perspective, can help us further theorize how motherscholars and daughterscholars partake in reciprocal raced and gendered socialization processes as they teach and learn from one another. Indeed, this section examines research that can help us better understand how motherscholar-daughterscholar dyads develop pedagogies and epistemologies as they negotiate various cultural and academic borders. At the end of this section, I return to the developing model of Critical Parenting Racial Socialization that was introduced earlier in the chapter. However, I complicate the model even further by drawing on Anzaldúan Feminist scholarship and Chicana Feminist Epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998) as I center Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters.

⁵⁸ See for example the work of The Chicana M(other)work Collective at <https://www.chicanamotherwork.com>; and The Big Gurls Code at <http://www.thebiggirlscodes.com>.

⁵⁹ Anzaldúa spells Borderlands with a capital B to encompass psychic, sexual, spiritual, geographical, and political borderlands (Keating, 2009). When Anzaldúa does not capitalize borderlands she generally refers to the Texas-México border. I use both Borderlands and borderlands in my writing in reference to metaphoric and geographic borders.

Borderlands Discourse

In her work on borderlands theory, Anzaldúa (2012) urges us to consider the possibility of borderlands beyond just geographic/political borders. Anzaldúa explains borderlands can be both geographic and metaphoric and represent “intensely painful yet also potentially transformational spaces where opposites converge, conflict, and transform” (Keating, 2009, p. 319). Borderlands are metaphorical when we consider the nexus of spiritual, psychic, sexual, cultural (and I would add academic borders). It is in these literal and metaphorical borderlands, where a mestiza consciousness develops. Anzaldúa (2015) explains:

The mestiza, the women of the Borderlands copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity . . . She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else. (p. 101)

I argue, much like the mestiza, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars develop a tolerance for contradictions and ambiguities in the everyday. Therefore, these women straddle familial, cultural, and academic terrains on the college journeys.

Borderlands Pedagogies

Villenas (2006) research, which frames mother-daughter relationships in terms of borderlands pedagogies, informs my thinking about the borderlands and pedagogy. In her book chapter, Villenas (2006) uses Anzaldúa’s conception of *nepántla* to explain how mothers negotiate cultural, generational, citizenship, and mothering borderlands when imparting mother-daughter pedagogies to their daughters. Gloria E. Anzaldúa (2012) uses the concept of *nepantla* to theorize the borderlands. She argues Chicanas/Latinas often find themselves in a constant a state of in betweenness found at the nexus of several borderlands. While they traverse *nepantla* spaces, Chicanas/Latinas began to form individual and collective self-definitions, but they also

“begin to [question] our previously accepted worldviews (our epistemologies, ontologies, and/or ethics)” (Anzaldua & Keating, 2015, xxxv).

Anzaldúa’s theorization of the borderlands, and concepts like *nepantla* which are connected to Borderlands discourse, are foundational to my thinking about motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies. Particularly, the notion of straddling cross-sectional identities while in the borderlands, prompts me to consider how motherscholars and daughterscholars juggle intersecting cultures (i.e., home, work, school, etc.) in their pursuit of formal education.

Elenes (2006) and Elenes et al. (2001) also draws on Anzaldúa’s borderlands to talk about pedagogy and educación. She asserts that using a borderlands paradigm can advance educational theory because it challenges us to move beyond binary ways of thinking as we consider how multiple subjectivities and differences in ways of being and knowing (Elenes, 2006). By recognizing the coming together and clashing of these borderland pedagogies, she (re)centers marginalized subjectivities and ways of knowing found at the nexus of these borders. The theoretical tool of the borderlands is a helpful analytical tool for Villenas (2006), Elenes et al. (2001), and me, because it pushes us to move away from simple categorizations, and instead to accommodate for contradictions and ambiguities that may present themselves in mother-daughter relationships. Moreover, this framing allows me to tell the stories of motherscholars and daughterscholars by embracing how interactions and subjectivities are not fixed; rather, they are dynamic and at times conflicting.

Delgado Bernal (2006) similarly draws on Anzaldúa’s theorization of borderlands and the *mestiza* consciousness to makes sense of how Chicana/Latina undergraduates experience schooling in the U.S. She frames *mestiza* consciousness in terms of how “a student balances, negotiates, and draws from her bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and

spiritualities in relationship to her education” (p. 117). The conceptual tools—mestiza consciousness and borderlands—allows me to investigate how motherscholars and daughterscholars navigate the mixed messages they often receive from each other, and from larger society as they attend college together in the U.S.

Indeed, the various lines of research that I include in this review of literature are significant to this study because they all inform how I come to understand Chicana/Latina motherscholar and daughterscholar educational experiences. Chicana/Latina Feminist discourses push me to (a) center the Chicana/Latina woman (Delgado Bernal, 1998) and (b) consider how (other)mothers and (other)daughters (such as siblings, cousins, and aunts) exchange pedagogies of the borderlands. Moreover, the literature prompts me to conceptualize raced and gendered socialization exchanges along the lines of mother-daughter pedagogies (Villenas & Moreno, 2001). In other words, existing research prompts me to take note of how processes of mujer-oriented familial socialization take place in a cyclical manner. I argue, in the case of motherscholar and daughterscholar relationships, motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies are the vehicle that move these socialization processes forward. As such, I understand motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies as belonging to a larger pedagogical toolkit that Chicana/Latina mujeres cultivate and draw on to teach from, learn with, and socialize one another in their pursuit of higher learning. Though these women may find themselves occupying a liminal space on the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, scholarhood, and/or some other nepantla, they negotiate their positionalities within these overlapping borderlands by cultivating borderland pedagogies.

When we investigate the experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars using a framework rooted in borderlands theory and pedagogical exchange, we

are asked to consider how these women develop borderland pedagogies as they respond to messages they receive from, and behaviors they observe when engaging with their mother or daughter counterpart. I show what this process of socialization could theoretically look like for Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars, in The Critical Race Feminista Mother-Daughter Socialization Model (Figure 3). This third adaptation of Stevenson’s (2014) research is different than Figure 1 and 2 because it includes a Chicana Feminist sensibility and shows how the model is applicable when we specifically consider the experiences of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters.

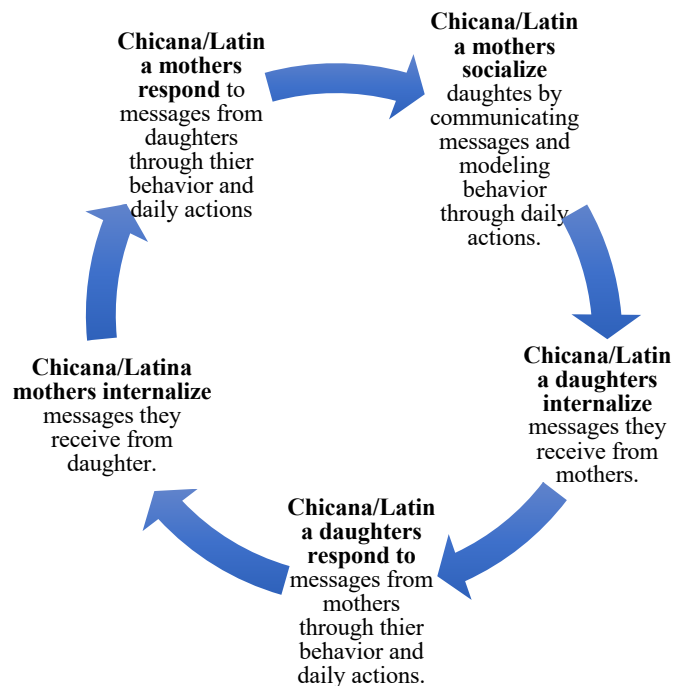


Figure 3. Critical Race Feminista Mother-Daughter Socialization Model (adapted from (Stevenson, 2014), informed Critical Race Parenting scholarship and Anzaldúan Feminisms).

Building on the academic literature and on Steven’s (2014) model in its original (Figure 1) and adapted forms (Figures 2 and 3), I contend. Critical Race Feminista mother-daughter socialization practices are inclusive of the practices, behaviors, and pedagogies that Chicana/Latina scholars utilize and exchange as they connect school and home. This complex

phenomenon of raced and gendered socialization is located at the nexus of the person, family, and society, and provides us with the conceptual tools to explain how Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar groups disrupt the cultural boundaries inside the academy, outside of higher education circles, across generations, and within hierarchies of difference.

Moreover, built on racial socialization literature (Stevenson, 2014), Critical Race Parenting scholarship (Nishi & Matias, 2018), *educación* (Valdés, 1996), mother-daughter pedagogies (Villenas & Moreno, 2001), and Borderlands studies, this framework challenges us to examine how Chicana/Latina scholars disrupt cultural boundaries inside and outside of higher education spaces. Furthermore, it offers the theoretical grounding studies that seek to uncover how Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars (a) impart *educación* and pedagogies to one another through culturally relevant socialization exchanges, while (b) making meaning of these cultural messages and socialization processes. Ultimately, this model pushes us to see these borderlands, where Latina mothers and daughters teach and learn through body and words, [as] pedagogical spaces—indeed an intangible “third space” (Villenas, 2006, p. 147)—where dilemma are negotiated and possibilities for creativity and self-love flow.

This third model merges all four thematic lines of literature presented in this chapter. Now that I have shared my preliminary conceptualization of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar socialization as it is informed by existing research, I conclude this Critical Race Feminista Review of Literature.

Looking Back & Looking Forward

This chapter presented a Critical Race Feminista literature review. I began by first describing central concepts that guided the study and the selection of the literature—*educación* pedagogy, family, mothers, and daughters. I then described and critiqued existing scholarship

around four major themes: (a) Familial Involvement literature, (b) Racial Socialization and Critical Race Parenting scholarship, (c) Research on gendered socialization and Chicana/Latina Feminist Pedagogy, and (d) Borderlands discourse. All these lines of research inform my analysis of the educational life experiences of mothers and daughters who attend college together. In the next chapter, I build on this literature review and explain how the existing scholarship informs the methods and methodologies I employ in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

For Chicana/Latina researchers, methodologies become more than tools for obtaining data; methodologies are extensions of ways of knowing and being, thus are central to the way we embody and perform research.

(Saavedra & Salazar Pérez, 2014, p. 78)

In the previous chapter, I surveyed several categories of research related to the educational plight of Chicana/Latina college students in the U.S. In this chapter, I engage a discussion about the study's methods and methodology. I divide this chapter into two parts. In Part 1, I explain how my experience carrying out an autoethnographic pilot study helped me design the dissertation. Integrated into this discussion is a rationale as to why a *plática* (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) and Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology (CRFEM) complement one another and are critical for use in a study that examines the teaching and learning processes that unfold between Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars. I then transition to Part 2 where I explain the dissertation's research design and data collection and analysis process. I begin Part 2 by offering readers an overview of the study; then I reiterate the purpose and the guiding research questions. Following this, I describe my inclusion criteria, the process of recruitment, and I introduce my collaborators. After this, I discuss the dissertation study design. I conclude the chapter by sharing how I used a modified grounded theory approach with a Critical Race Feminista sensibility to analyze my data. I begin this discussion by speaking on my longing to construct Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar narratives.

Part 1: Fulfilling a Longing to Construct Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Narratives

Readers will recall from the Prologue that my commitment to advocate for the educational advancement of motherscholars and daughterscholars stems from an interest in making meaning of my personal journey as a Chicana daughter who has navigated the trenches

of the U.S. academe alongside her mother. Recollections of my mother's (re)commitment to pursue college as a parenting student, and at a time that converged with my own college journey led me to be curious about the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint educational life experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars. In the Fall 2015, when I first began my Master's program, I designed an auto-ethnographic research study that sought to capture the essence of Chicana/Latina educational life histories—these histories spanned numerous familial and cultural generations. I was specifically interested in understanding how my mother and I educated one another as we progressed through our respective graduate programs of study. I was also driven by a phenomenological impetus; that is, I hoped to capture the essence of our lived experiences, inquire about the details that informed those experiences, and engage in purposeful meaning making (Seidman, 2019). Guided by these interests, I designed a pilot study which asked: *How do Chicana/Latina graduate students cultivate motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies as they design and conduct research studies that honor the stories of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters in the academy?*

Two first-generation Chicana graduate students participated in the data collection—me, Cindy R. Escobedo, and my mother, Cecilia. I leaned into Seidman's (2019) Three-Part Interview Approach⁶⁰ as I designed the pilot, but I included methodologies that extended beyond interviews. Thus, qualitative data was drawn from three sources: (a) auto-ethnographic field site

⁶⁰ In his guide to phenomenological researching, Seidman (2019) emphasizes the importance of exploring the meanings of people's experiences in the context of their lives through the implementation of a three-interview series. In this series, "The first interview establishes the context of the participant's experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experiences within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them." (p. 21). I adapt Seidman's three-interview model by drawing on methods that extend beyond just interviews. Though I do not carry out separate interviews, I maintain elements of phenomenological researching as they relate to specific components of Seidman's framework by incorporating pláticas and epistolary writings that speak to each of the 3 phenomenological components.

observations; (b) pláticas, which are Chicana/Latina centered conversations that can be used “to gather family and cultural knowledge throughout communication of thoughts, memories, ambiguities, and new interpretations” (Godinez 2006, p. 6); and (c) epistolary writings that I later called the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology. In the sections that follow, I describe these methodologies in greater depth and I include a rationale as to why they were useful for carrying out research that centers Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars educational life experiences.

Methods and Methodology Informing the Pilot

Much like Malagón and colleagues (2009), in designing the auto-ethnographic pilot, “I struggled with finding qualitative research methodologies that ‘are critically sensitive in their abilities to situate [Woman of Color] lived experiences within a broader sociopolitical frame—both in the final research product and throughout the entire research process’” (Malagón et al., 2009, p. 1). More specifically, though, I struggled to locate methodologies that honored Women of Color ways of being and knowing, while also questioning long-held beliefs about objectivity in Western research traditions. It was not until I began to engage more deeply with the research process itself, and with existing scholarship on Chicana Feminist Epistemology (CFE) and Chicana/Latina Feminist methodologies, that I felt more comfortable designing and conducting the pilot. Calderón et al. (2012) understand CFE as “a response to the failure of both mainstream education research and liberal feminist scholarship [to address] the forms of knowledge and experiences Chicanas bring to educational institutions and research” (p. 515). They emphasize the importance of placing Chicanas/Latinas as central subjects in the research process and advocate that research platforms be used as forums for Chicana/Latina voices to speak. CFE guided the creation and implementation of the pilot in its entirety; yet I was primarily driven by

the affirmation that Chicana/Latina mothers and daughter are vital assets to social justice researching. Indeed, I approached the pilot study confident in my belief that Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar researchers are “legitimate, appropriate, and effective for designing, conducting, and analyzing educational research” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 563). I was also driven by a culturally relevant methodology that stems out of Chicana/Latina Feminist tradition—pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Godinez, 2006). Since I was theorizing about my own educational experiences and exploring an intimate part of my mother’s life, I decided to conduct the research with my mother by engaging in a way that I normally do, by platicando⁶¹.

Engaging a Plática Methodology

Godinez (2006) explicates that pláticas, a method specific to Chicana/Latina focused research, can be used “to gather family and cultural knowledge through communication of thoughts, memories, ambiguities, and new interpretations” (p. 30). Pláticas, or conversational encounters, can be carried out in traditional academic spaces, but can also transcend the academy when they are carried out in less formal spaces like in the home, while driving in a car, or even over lunch after church worship (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Gaxiola Serrano, 2018). Using pláticas as a methodology was important for my study on motherscholar-daughterscholar teaching and learning because it allowed for reciprocity in data collection. That is, the flexibility of pláticas made it such that I was not obligated to follow a rigid interview protocol when conversing with my mother. Rather, dialoguing flourished more naturally because of the conversational and informal nature of the encounters. In this way, pláticas afforded me space to honor my mother’s voice, while I positioned both she and I as co-creators of knowledge.

⁶¹ Platicando translates to engaging in informal conversation.

Ultimately, the methodological tool of *pláticas* afforded my mom an opportunity to reclaim her agentive role in a study that highlighted very intimate parts of her life. Moreover, it served as a, “pivotal and necessary component of traversing academic spaces [. . . and] it allowed us to weave the personal and academic” (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 99).

Engaging the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology

Another way that I merged the personal with the academic was by developing a raced and gendered epistolary writing methodology that I called the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology (CRFEM). I argue, a CRFEM is theoretically and methodologically aligned with a Critical Race Feminista Praxis (Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017) and creates opportunities for Women of Color to challenge the historical legacies and contemporary manifestations of racist and gendered oppression through the construction of handwritten and digital letters addressed for, though not necessarily delivered to relatives, institutional agents, future generations, and the self. Much like *pláticas*, creative and epistolary writings can serve as primary documents. They are in fact, handwritten evidence of Women of Color resilience and resistance. Thus, I saw this methodology as one that honors texts written by and about Chicanas/Latinas because it serves as a platform for Chicana/Latina voices to speak in textual and literary spaces. It also affords an opportunity for researchers and research collaborators to construct maternal and daughteral subjectivity by bringing together in the same textual space the aggregate borderland (Anzaldúa, 2012) identities they possess (Juhasz, 2003). Additionally, I saw this methodology as a writing tool that can denounces the raced and gendered marginalization that Mothers and Daughters of Color encounter inside and outside the Academy (Cisneros, 2018).

In the pilot study, as in this dissertation, the CRFEM played a central role in unsettling patriarchal, gendered, and cultural relations between my mom and I, thereby providing a more

critical account of how Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters experience schooling alongside one another. Much like Dr. Nora Cisneros (2018), my interest in using handwritten letter writing as a methodology is rooted in familial genealogies (my mother and father wrote the first letters I received as a child), and my cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Throughout my childhood, letter writing became a therapeutic exercise that allowed me to “talk back” to my mother when verbally responding to parents and elders was deemed inappropriate or a sign of being *maleducada*.⁶² Within the context of qualitative research, writing is especially integral to qualitative research (Richardson, 2000) and central for documenting and analyzing research data (Creswell, 2002). Written personal reflections are helpful as a strategy for documenting researcher positionality and practicing reflexivity. However, few qualitative studies analyze and incorporate creative writing and epistolary writing as central to the research methods and methodology. As such, missing from the qualitative research cannon are studies that use handwritten creative and epistolary writing methods to help us examine and understand how writing mediates the educational experiences of Students of Color while exposing institutional structures and practices that maintain oppressive conditions for said students (Cisneros, 2018, p. 193). I was intent on responding to the methodological gap.

The CRFEM was included in the pilot because it was designed to be a place where my mother and I could expand on the details and particularities that were brought up in the *pláticas*. However, I often found that the handwritten letters my mother completed were not as thorough I would have liked them to be. In other words, while I had originally planned for my mother and me to commit to thorough letter writing throughout the data collection phase, this did not happen. Instead, my mom’s writings were structured more as short inspirational memos or quick

⁶² *Maleducada* translates to being poorly educated in an ethical/moral sense.

reflections on topics we had previously gone over in the pláticas. This was a stark contrast to my writings which really provided deep-seated responses to the pláticas. From my perspective (that of the daughterscholar), the CRFEM was significant because letter writing allowed me to think, reflect, and respond to moments of tension and contradiction that came up during the pláticas. Because my voice was sometimes silenced in the pláticas, the epistolary methodology was significant since it allowed me, a Chicana/Latina daughter, to “write back” (Cisneros, 2018) to my mother in a respectful manner, when verbally responding to my mother during the pláticas was difficult and (almost impossible) to do. For example, after reflecting in my reflexive journal, on March 8, 2016, I shared ⁶³ some key points that emerged from my handwritten letter writing with my mother:

So another thing that I found when I was doing the [plática] transcription [and the letter writing] was I never really had a chance to speak. And I was always listening and had to listen. Then I would try and counter something, [but] I always felt like I didn't have an opportunity to speak because of the power relationships. You're my mom and that's fine, I have to respect you.

My mother then verbally responded with, “But you know what I noticed now that you're saying that? I noticed that [I was talking a lot, and I didn't take time to listen].” Indeed, throughout this pilot, “writing [became] the site where I [critiqued] reality, identity, language, and dominant cultures' representation and ideological controls” (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2015, p. 3), especially as it related to my ever-evolving relationship with my mother. Ultimately, the CRFEM allowed me to reclaim the daughteral voice in a study that sought to elevate both the maternal and daughteral voice to the same level, but struggled to do so because cultural power relationships elevated the maternal perspective, and subjugated the daughteral point of view. Though my mother's reflections did not necessarily provide the rich and thick description and insight that I (as a

⁶³ I would like to note that this response was delivered verbally, during the plática with my mother.

qualitative researcher) would have appreciated, it did allow to me, as a daughterscholar to practice reflexivity in the data collection and analysis. In this way, I engaged in critical meaning making as I constructed my own letters.

Lessons Learned from the Pilot Study

Before I conclude Part 1 of this chapter, I would like to share some lessons learned from carrying out the pilot study. When I circle back to this pilot's guiding research question⁶⁴, I am reminded of how my mother me ha educado⁶⁵ throughout the research process. Among other lessons, my mother inspired me to reclaim and recenter the Chicana/Latina maternal and daughteral voices; she also reminded me of the importance of honoring maternal narratives of educational resilience. Additionally, I learned that in order to truly understand an educational narrative that is very much aligned to my own, I must acknowledge all facets of Chicana/Latina education using an epistemological orientation, and methodologies that are empowering, engaging, reciprocal, and culturally relevant. All in all, carrying out this pilot study fueled my desire to look beyond the scope of my own familial experience to capture the texture and nuance of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar experiences across time and space. I am intentional about weaving into the design of this dissertation methodologies that invite Mothers and Daughters of Color to recount, remember, and preserve narratives of educational resilience because of my commitment to nurture my cultural intuition.

In her 1998 research, Dolores Delgado Bernal reimagined the notion of cultural sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) by introducing a concept that more wholly captures the

⁶⁴ As a reminder to the reader, the guiding research question is: How do Chicana/Latina graduate students cultivate motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies as they design and conduct research studies that honor the stories of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters in the academy?

⁶⁵ Me ha educado translates to has educated me.

unique viewpoints Chicanas/Latinas bring to the research process, what she terms, cultural intuition. She describes the factors that influence Chicana/Latina cultural intuition as those which are

. . . nurtured through our personal experiences (which are influenced by ancestral wisdom, community memory, and intuition), the literature on and about Chicanas, our professional experiences, and the analytic process we engage in when we are in a central position in our research and our analysis. Thus, cultural intuition is a complex process that is experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective and dynamic. (Delgado Bernal, 1998a, pp. 567–568)

I join Delgado Bernal (1998) in positioning these four sources of cultural intuition as foundational to my research episteme. Cultural intuition as a conceptual tool rooted in a Chicana/Latina Feminist tradition provides me with the tools necessary for theorizing about a reality that mirrors my own lived experiences in many. Moreover, the tool of cultural intuition pushes me to deconstruct researcher-subject dichotomies by acknowledging that Chicana/Latina researchers and collaborators are equally, “agents of knowledge who participate in intellectual discourse that links experiences, research, community, and social change” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 560). I leaned into my cultural intuition as I designed the dissertation.

Part 2: Methods and Methodology of the Dissertation

As a reminder to the reader this dissertation centers the teaching and learning practices that take place between Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars over a 50-year time span. I am interested in understanding how Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters who pursue formal education at the same time, understand and explain their relationship to one each other, and to the U.S. education system. The questions guiding this research are:

Research Question 1: What are the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college between the 1970s and 2020s?

Research Question 2: What are the pedagogies the motherscholars and daughterscholars developed and imparted to one another as they navigated higher education?

I provided answers to these two questions by triangulating 24 pláticas (17 individual and 7 group pláticas), 42 handwritten letters, and supplemental materials noted in my reflexive journal.

Together, these data sources helped me construct an educational narrative that provides a snapshot into the lives of nine Chicana/Latina mother-daughter teams (22 women in total) who attended college jointly between the 1970s and 2020s.

Research Participants: Collaborator Criteria, Collaborator Description, and Recruitment

I used a purposeful selection method (Creswell, 2002) to identify my research collaborators. In using purposeful selection, the “particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to [my] questions and goals, and that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 97). I worked alongside a cohort of 22 research collaborators. My decision to include only 22 collaborators aligns with the practices of many qualitative researchers who often rely on a small number of participants to include for a major part of their data (Maxwell 2013). I agree with Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) who affirm, “social scientists strive for a closeness to life, seeking to capture the texture and nuance of human experience...not complete and full representation, but rather, the selection of some aspect of—or angle on—reality that would transform our vision of the whole” (p. 5). In this research, I do not make claims to generalizability. Rather, I present an in-depth analysis that investigates the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college in the U.S.

The inclusion criteria were very particular. To be included in the research, my collaborators were required to self-identify as Chicana/Latinas who formed part of a motherscholar-daughterscholar group. That is, they needed to be either a mother who attended college alongside her daughter, or a daughter who attended college alongside her mother. The

mother-daughter groups needed to have attended college at times that overlapped, at some point in their lives, but they were neither expected, nor required to have pursued their degrees at the same institution. The women were also not required to have pursued the same degree type. Each person in the mother-daughter group was required to have completed (or to have been in the process of completing) her post-secondary studies at a not-for profit institution of higher learning. Finally, and most importantly, both the daughterscholar and motherscholar must have expressed an interest and availability to participate in the study. The paired component was central to the research. If individuals did not meet these inclusion criteria, they were excluded from participating in the study. Now that I have described the collaborator criteria, I briefly describe the cohort of 22 mothers and daughters who participated in the research.

A Note on Motherhood and Daughterhood

Given the retrospective nature of this birthstory and its multi-generational approach to examining the educational sociology of Chicana/o and Latina/o families, I describe my research collaborators using identifiers that characterize their relationship to others using a present-day orientation. For example, I use language such as “mothers” and “daughters,” for clarity purposes, and to help distinguish which familial generation I am referencing in the narrative (i.e., the motherscholars versus the daughterscholars). However, I am attuned to the fact that in using these qualifiers, I run the risk of potentially perpetuating dichotomies which position motherhood and daughterhood as mutually exclusive categories used to describe different epochs in a woman’s life. Reproducing dichotomies of any sort, and of this nature is not my intention. To contend with this, I lean into Kimberley Crenshaw’s (1989) conceptualization of intersectionality and to Gloria Anzaldúa’s (2012) borderlands discourses to examine and articulate the complexities which color my research collaborators’ fluid movement through the world. With an

intersectional lens and operating from a borderlands paradigm, I acknowledge, and I remind readers that the women in this study have occupied positions as mothers, daughters, othermothers, and otherdaughters at different points in their lives. In some cases, these identities have overlapped; in other cases, the women have weaved in and out of the borderlands of motherhood and daughterhood while negotiating their place as mujeres, mamás, and hijas.

Table 2

Research Collaborator Criteria

Collaborator Criteria	Rationale
Self-Identifies as a Chicana/Latina	Although I reference Woman of Color motherscholar-daughterscholar teams in this study, I center my analysis on families with women who self-identify as Chicana/Latina.
Daughterscholar and Motherscholar navigate higher education concurrently.	This study further theorizes Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies through the lens of motherscholars and daughterscholars who have gone through college at the same time. This area of study stands as undertheorized; therefore, I focus on this population.
Pursuing post-secondary studies at a not-for-profit institution of higher learning.	I am interested in learning about mothers and daughters who attended public and private institutions of higher learning.
Daughterscholar and Motherscholar express interest and availability to participate in research.	It is important that the mothers and daughters express an interest and availability for the study because of the paired mother-daughter component to this research study.

Recruitment

To recruit participants for the study, I created a flyer that included information on the study, the criteria to participate, my contact information, and a link to a Google Forms questionnaire. The questionnaire included 12 questions with an estimated time of completion of 10 minutes. Most of the questions asked for basic information such as name, email, institution, and year in program. There were other questions that asked the women to self-identify and to share why they were interested in participating in the study. The final set of questions gave them an opportunity to pose questions or add any additional comments or concerns about the study. After they completed the questionnaire, I contacted them via email or phone to introduce myself,

share more information about the study, inquire any further questions I had for screening purposes, and to address any questions or concerns they had.

The flyer was distributed in several ways: through personal networks, email list serves, social media, and an undergraduate student diversity center at one institution (see Appendix A). I began by sending out personal emails to colleagues, friends, and professors, and asking them to share it with their networks. I then sent it out through list serves like Dr. Daniel Solórzano's Research Apprentice Course (RAC). I used social media as well by sharing my flier on my Facebook page (by posting it on groups like Latinas Completing Doctoral Degrees). Friends and colleagues also shared the flyer on Facebook. Additionally, I posted physical copies of my flier in public spaces at UCLA, my home institution.

Recruitment spanned the course of about half a year and extended over the course of a full year because I started to learn about more mother-daughter groups who were interested in participating in the study as time progressed. The flyer initially began circulating in May of 2019 and I recruited five mother-daughter dyads (ten women) to participate by October 2019. However, as I began to learn more about the family dynamics during the data collection process, I found out that there were several families who were actually motherscholar-daughterscholar triads (mother and two daughters). When this was the case, I invited sisters to participate as well. This elongated the recruitment process and extended the data collection process. The COVID-19 crisis also extended the recruitment (and as an extension the data collection) process because families who had at one point agreed to participate found it challenging to contribute in the midst of a global health crisis. For those women who needed more time to agree to participate, I gave them space to just exist and I continued my search for more collaborators. As I headed into the data collection phase, I started learning about more women who were interested in contributing

to the research process (I learned about them by email reference) and invited them to participate as well. After screening them either over the phone, in person, or on Zoom (see Appendix B), and ensuring they met the eligibility criteria, I invited them to participate (see Appendix C). In the end, 22 women (9 motherscholar-daughterscholar teams) contributed to the study as research collaborators.

The Mamás y Hijas

A total of 9 families (22 women total) participated in this research, but their levels of involvement varied. Seven families (17 women) formally participated in this study by following the official research protocol (completing an individual plática, a mother-daughter group plática, and engaging in the letter writing activities), and the other 2 families (5 women) contributed in complementary ways (they did not formally participate in the individual and group pláticas, nor in the writing activities). The Levya, Nino, Valencia, R. Peña-Luquin, Abraham, Chipi, and Titus families participating in an individual and group pláticas and wrote letters to one another. The de Uriarte and Escobedo families, on the other hand, did not formally participate in the research, but their contributions were invaluable to helping construct the Birthstory. The de Uriarte women (Mercedes and Cristina) shared reflections about their individual and joint experiences in college by communicating with me via email and/or phone. The Escobedo women (my mom, sister, and I) engaged with one another by having informal pláticas throughout the entire research process. I took notes of our conversations in my researcher reflexivity journal and by saving notes and letters they wrote to me throughout the course of the study. With the de Uriarte and Escobedo contributions, as well as those of the other seven families, I was able to craft an analytic narrative that details the educational life experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college together in the United States from the 1972 to the 2021

(see Appendix D and Appendix E).

Four of the nine families chose to be identified by their real names (de Uriarte, R. Peña-Luquin, Abraham, & Escobedo families). The other five chose to be identified by pseudonyms (Nino, Valencia, Leyva, Chipi, & Titus families). When participants did not provide me with a pseudonym, I created one. This is especially true for the family last names. With the exception of the Leyva family, I made up the last name pseudonyms for the family names denoted with an asterisk in the Table below. I drew inspiration from the knowledge I acquired about my research collaborator's family histories to craft these last names.

The Motherscholars

Nine fierce motherscholars—Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, Erika R. Peña, Frida Leyva, Socorro Genoveva Nino, Francisca Valencia, Glorita Chipi, Gaby Abraham, Sofia Titus, and Cecilia R. Escobedo (my mother)—are the focal mothers in the dissertation. They are all first-generation college students; all grew up in working-class families; and all are immigrants or children of immigrants with cultural ties to countries across the Americas. Most of the mothers are the eldest children and eldest daughters in their family, though not all. Most of the mothers were also transfer scholars who began their post-secondary journeys in the U.S. at community colleges (Mercedes, Erika, Francisca, Glorita, Gaby, Sofia, and Cecilia); two of them enrolled in a four-year university immediately following their high school graduations (Frida and Socorro Genoveva). The mothers represented all levels of the higher education pipeline—the community college, four-year institutions, and graduate programs. All the motherscholars identified as Chicana/Latina women, but they were also intentional about highlighting their ethnic identification so that it aligned more connectedly with their cultural backgrounds and nations of origin. As such, this dissertation narrates the educational life experiences of motherscholars who

claim Belizean (Frida), Peruvian (Glorita), Guatemalan (Erika) and Mexican (Mercedes, Socorro Genoveva, Francisca, Sofia, & Cecilia) ancestry. The diversity of life experience resulting from the motherscholars' association with the raced and gendered pan-ethnic group "Chicana/Latina," complicates our understanding of how this group of women navigated formal and informal education structures within and beyond a U.S. context.

The Daughterscholars

Thirteen daughterscholars—Cristina Bodinger-de Uriarte, Cindy Luquin, Maria Leyva, Nela Leyva, Selena Nino, Priscilla Valencia, Paulina Valencia, Karla Chipi, Danielle Abraham, Renee Titus, Alanis Titus, Abigail Escobedo, and (me) Cindy R. Escobedo—are the focal daughters in the study. They all grew up in working-class families and all are immigrants or children of immigrants with cultural ties to countries across the Americas. Most of the daughters are the eldest children and eldest daughters in their family, though not all are. Half of the daughters are transfer scholars who progressed through California community colleges (Cindy Luquin, Nela, Priscilla, Danielle, Paulina, Abigail); and the other half enrolled in a four-year university immediately following their high school graduations (Cristina, Maria, Karla, Selena, Alanis, Renee, & Cindy R. Escobedo). The daughters represented all levels of the higher education pipeline—the community college, four-year institutions, at graduate programs. Like their mothers, the daughterscholars identified as Chicana/Latina women, but they also highlighted their ethnic identification so that it aligned more connectedly with their cultural backgrounds. As such, the daughters claimed a mixture of Belizean (Maria & Nela), Peruvian (Karla), Guatemalan (Cindy Luquin, Renee, Alanis), Salvadorean (Cindy Luquin), Puerto Rican (Renee & Alanis), Israeli (Danielle), and Mexican (Cristina, Selena, Priscilla, Paulina, Maria, Nela, Renee, Alanis, Abigail, and Cindy R. Escobedo) ancestry. Not surprising, all the daughters

referred to their bicultural (and sometimes bi- and tri-ethnic) experiences navigating U.S. higher education systems. The Table below includes further information regarding participant demographics (pseudonyms are denoted with an asterisk).

Table 3

Research Collaborators' Personal Demographics

Family Name	Collaborator's Name	Mother or Daughter (D/M)	Racial/Ethnic Ancestry	Place in Birth Order	Higher Education Institutions Attended	Community College (Yes or No)
de Uriarte	Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte	M	Mexican	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Fullerton College, CSU Fullerton, Yale University	Yes
	Cristina Bodinger-de Uriarte	D	Mexican	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Yale University, Harvard University	No
R. Peña-Luquin	Erika R. Peña	M	Guatemalan	Middle Child, Middle Daughter	College of the Canyons	Yes
	Cindy Luquin	D	Salvadoran-Guatemalan	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	College of the Canyons, CSU Fullerton, CSU Los Angeles	Yes
Abraham	Gaby Abraham	M	Mexican	Second Oldest Child	LA Valley College, UC Los Angeles	Yes
	Danielle Abraham	D	Mexican-Israeli	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Pierce College, UC Los Angeles	Yes
Escobedo	Cecilia R. Escobedo	M	Mexican	Middle Daughter, Middle Child	Rio Hondo College, Azusa Pacific University	Yes
	Cindy R. Escobedo	D	Mexican	Eldest Daughter Middle Child	UC Los Angeles	No
	Abigail Escobedo	D	Mexican	Youngest Daughter, Youngest Child	Azusa Pacific University, Citrus College, UC Santa Barbara	Yes
* Nino	*Socorro Genoveva Nino	M	Mexican	Middle Daughter, Middle Child	UC Santa Barbara, CSU Northridge	No
	*Selena Nino	D	Mexican	Only Child	CSU Fullerton, UC Los Angeles	No
*Valencia	*Francisca Valencia	M	Mexican	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Rio Hondo College, UC Irvine, CSU Long Beach, Chicago	Yes

					School of Psychology	
	*Priscilla Valencia	D	Mexican	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Community College, UC Riverside, California State Polytechnic Institute, Pomona	Yes
	* Paulina Valencia	D	Mexican	Youngest Daughter, Middle Child	Community College	Yes
*Leyva	*Frida Leyva	M	Belizean	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Mount St. Mary's College, CSU Los Angeles, Azusa Pacific University	No
	*Maria Leyva (Gonzalez)	D	Mexican-Belizean	Oldest Daughter, Middle Child	CSU Northridge	No
	*Nela Leyva	D	Mexican-Belizean	Youngest Daughter, Youngest Child	Rio Hondo College	Yes
*Chipi	*Glorita Chipi	M	Peruvian	Middle Daughter, Middle Child	Peruvian Naval Academy, Bakersfield College	Yes
	*Karla Chipi	D	Peruvian	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	UC Los Angeles	No
*Titus	*Sofia Titus	M	Mexican	Youngest Child, Youngest Daughter	Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, San Joaquin Delta College, Penn. State World Campus	Yes
	*Devina Titus	D	Mexican-Puerto Rican-Guatemalan	Oldest Daughter, Oldest Child	Seton Hill University	No
	*Alanis Titus	D	Mexican-Puerto Rican-Guatemalan	Second Oldest Child, Second Oldest Daughter	UC Los Angeles	No

Study Design

Now that I have introduced my research collaborators, I describe the design of the study and explain the data collection tools I used. This dissertation takes a phenomenological approach

to qualitative research. I draw inspiration from Seidman's (2019) Three-Part Interview Approach because it helps me consider the different components of phenomenology. In his guide, Seidman (2019) emphasizes the importance of exploring the meanings of people's experiences in the context of their own lives through the implementation of a three-interview series. In this series, "The first interview establishes the context of the participant's experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experiences within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them" (Seidman, 2019, p. 21). In this dissertation, I maintain elements of phenomenology as they relate to specific components of Seidman's framework, but I incorporate pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) and the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology in place of traditional interviews.

I triangulated my data by drawing on three different methodologies: (a) individual and group pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016), (b) handwritten Chicana/Latina epistolary writings, and (c) my reflexive journal (see Appendix F). The individual pláticas allowed me to contextualize and become familiar with my research collaborator's educational life history. The handwritten letters allowed me to zone in on details that color each of their educational journeys. The group pláticas afforded time and space for the mothers and daughters to reflect on the meanings of their lived experiences together. Finally, the reflexive journals allowed me to practice transparency throughout the entire research process. These qualitative methodologies helped me answer my research questions.

Before I proceed, I would like to offer a note about how the COVID-19 global health crisis affected the data collection process. I originally planned for all the pláticas to take place in face-to-face, in person formats. However, the onset of COVID-19 made this original goal an

impossibility. For one, I was not willing to put my research collaborators in a compromising health position by asking them to participate in in-person research activities. Secondly, the California Shelter-In-Place ordinances that went into effect in early March 2020 forbade “non-essential” gatherings and travel; this order served as a further affirmation for me to rethink my original in-person data collection plan. Thus, I made the decision to continue collecting data virtually, using a video call format. In March 2020, most pláticas were collected in-person (18 of the 24). However, 8 remained and were completed virtually, over the Zoom online video platform. Five of the 8 virtual pláticas were individual pláticas, the final 3 virtual pláticas were group pláticas. I feel confident the transition from an in-person to an online format did not affect the design of the study in any substantive way. I also believe the virtual pláticas maintained their essence and integrity.

Phases of Data Collection

Data collection took place in two phases for each family. First, I conducted individual pláticas with each member of the family. Embedded in this individual plática was an opportunity for each collaborator to craft a handwritten letter to their mother or daughter (this letter writing portion took place at the beginning of the individual plática). Once every member of the family completed the plática and letter, I moved on to the next phase. Different families were in different phases at different times during the data collection stage. The second phase involved facilitating a mother-daughter group plática and offering my collaborators opportunities to handcraft two letters to one another (the letter writing activities took place at the beginning and end of the group plática). Below, I provide a visual breakdown of the data collection phases. In the sections that follow, I provide a rationale for each method of data collection, and their relationship to the questions and theories informing this study at the end of this chapter. I took

notes in my reflexive journal and crafted analytic memos throughout the entire research process.

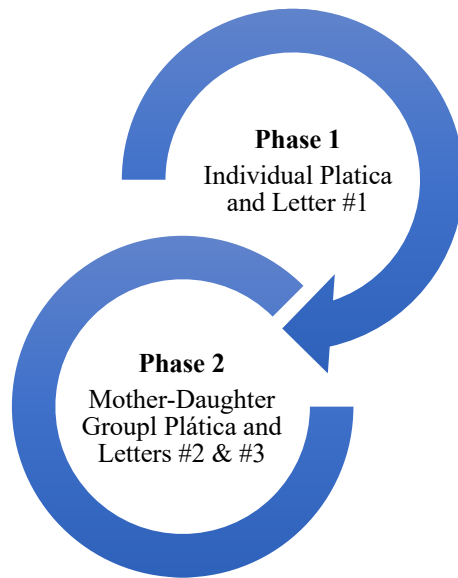


Figure 4. Phases of Data Collection.

Also important to note before I engage in a more thorough discussion about the phases of data collection is the fact that my research collaborators (myself included) are bilingual Spanish-English speakers. Some of us are also bilingual Spanish-English writers. Early in the research process, I learned my collaborators had varying levels of proficiency in and complex relationships with the English and Spanish languages. I was also conscious about the hegemony of the English language, especially as it manifests in Western research traditions. I was interested in nurturing spaces where my collaborators felt comfortable communicating in a language of their preference, so I invited them to communicate with me in tongues they felt most comfortable speaking and writing in. Throughout the course of the study, the mothers, daughters, and I communicated in English, Spanish, and Spanglish (a hybrid language combining words and idioms from both Spanish and English). However, I found that the daughters felt most comfortable speaking and writing in English and/or Spanglish. The mothers also felt comfortable

speaking and writing in English and/or Spanglish but speaking predominantly in Spanish (with hints of English interwoven in their verbal written responses) was the preference for some mothers. I felt most comfortable communicating in English and Spanglish, but I did my absolute best to speak exclusively in Spanish when that was my collaborator's preference. As a result, Spanish, English, and Spanglish are prominent in the pláticas (both individual and group), the epistolary writings, and even in my reflexive notes.

Pláticas

I used the plática methodology to theorize about how the women in my study contemplated and made meaning of their educational life experiences. I did this by facilitating two pláticas: an individual plática and a mother-daughter group plática. As a reminder to the reader, pláticas are “conversations that take place in one-on-one or group spaces, and which are a way to gather family and cultural knowledge through communication of thoughts, memories, ambiguities and new interpretations” (as cited in Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 11). Pláticas are similar to interviews, yet they incorporate a Chicana Feminist sensibility. Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) identify five elements of pláticas; I now list them and explain how they applied to the study.

- 1) Pláticas are grounded in Chicana/Latina feminist theory and critical theories that center People and Women of Color. These theoretical frames are used so as to unearth (a) the ways numerous systems of oppression effect the experiences of People and Women of Color and (b) the methods by which People and Women of Color enact agency in responding to these systems of oppression. I ground my epistemological, theoretical, and methodological orientations in Chicana Feminist Epistemology, Chicana/Latina Feminist Theories, and Critical Race Theory in Education. Combined, these are understood via a Critical Race Feminista lens and inform the ways in which I collect and analyze data. These theoretical and conceptual tools allow me to analyze the raced, gendered, and classed experiences of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters. In the plática spaces, my collaborators articulated the ways they enacted agency as they responded to systems of oppression and practices of exclusion during their individual and joint educational journeys. Therefore, the plática methodology aligned with the study's theoretical goals and research questions.

- 2) Pláticas honor research participants as co-constructors of knowledge. In an effort to decolonize the research process and disrupt hierarchies embedded in western research, I refer to the individuals participating in this research as “collaborators.” Moreover, in line with Chicana Feminist Epistemology, I honored their contributions as co-creators of knowledge throughout the analytic process. Ultimately, the plática methodology allowed me to nurture spaces where maternal and daughteral voices are elevated. It also afforded my collaborators an opportunity to reclaim their agentive role in a study that highlighted very intimate parts of their lives.
- 3) Pláticas push researchers to acknowledge and highlight the connections between everyday lived experiences and the research inquiry. This research is intrinsically tied to my raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences as a daughterscholar to a motherscholar. The plática methodology allowed me to draw connections between my lived experiences, and those of my research collaborators. In the plática spaces, I encouraged my collaborators to speak on their everyday lived experiences of educational marginalization and resiliency. These everyday experiences inform the construction of the Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Birthstory.
- 4) Pláticas provide a space for potential healing. I saw the potential for the pláticas to be healing in nature. Talking about ourselves, our mothers, and/or our daughters was emotionally taxing. Throughout the research process, I honored my collaborators’ contributions by centralizing their voices, but also being mindful of their emotional limits, as well as and my own (Flores, 2016).
- 5) Pláticas are sustained by researcher reciprocity, reflexivity, and vulnerability. Throughout the research process, I used my own journal to practice reflexivity and to engage in every activity that my research collaborators engage as a way to reflect on my methodology.

Phase 1: Individual Plática and Letter #1

The first stage of research included facilitating an individual plática with each collaborator and inviting them to write one letter. The purpose of conducting the individual pláticas was to understand how each collaborator made sense of: (a) her individual journey through the U.S. education system and (b) her mother’s/daughter’s influences on her academic journey. Before I initiated a conversation about their individual educational journeys, I invited each collaborator to write their first letter. They responded to the following prompt:

You are invited to handwrite a letter to your mother/daughter where you explain your motives for pursuing higher education. Consider what lead you to college, what excited you, what made you feel a bit nervous. Reflect on how your mother/daughter fits into your personal journey through college.

The letter writing activity served as a sort of brainstorming opportunity where the mothers and daughters had a chance to free write about their early educational experiences, before engaging a verbal conversation about their journey. Following the letter writing activity, I began the guided conversation where I invited my collaborators to verbally reflect on the following themes:

- 1) Individual and collective reasons why the mothers/daughters went to college.
- 2) How the mothers/daughters manage life as students and as women.
- 3) How the mother's and daughter's educational journeys can be understood as resulting from a mother-daughter partnership.
- 4) What lessons the mothers and daughters learned during their individual and joint college journeys.

Ultimately, the individual pláticas and the epistolary writing activity helped me answer both research questions: (a) What are the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college between the 1970s and 2020s? and (b) What are the pedagogies the motherscholars and daughterscholars developed and imparted to one another as they navigated higher education?

Phase 2: Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Group Plática & Letters #2 and #3

Based on the individual pláticas and the first letter, I developed preliminary findings and brought those to the second phase of the data collection process: the mother-daughter group plática. I conducted a follow-up plática to the individual conversations because this group meeting allowed me to tease out instances of contestation, divergence, and/or overlap that came up in the individual accounts. Another goal of the group pláticas was to facilitate the meaning-making process. That is, I embedded into the group plática an opportunity for my collaborators to reflect on their maternal-daughteral relationship by platicando with one another.

I began the group plática by welcoming the collaborators and inviting them to write their second letter. They responded to the following prompt:

You are invited to write a letter where you reflect on your journey as a mother-daughter pair. Please share a bit about what it is/was like to go to school together. What was a memorable moment that defined your time in school, and why was it memorable? Consider sharing lessons you might have learned from your mother/daughter which have been foundation to your educational journey. What were lessons you think you might have taught your mother/daughter?

As was the case in the individual plática, the creative writing opportunity was designed as a sort of warm-up for the verbal conversation which was to follow. Once they finished writing their letters, I transitioned to the conversational portion of Phase 2. I began by telling my collaborators that in between both meetings, I had taken the time to analyze their individual pláticas and letters. I let them know that I developed questions to guide the group plática based on my preliminary analysis. After sharing my preliminary findings, I asked my collaborators to add to my analysis and clarify and/or correct any developing findings.

After this conversation, I invited the mothers and daughters to reflect on their joint time in college together. This is where I inquired further details about the joint college era. Following this discussion was one final letter writing activity. My collaborators responded to the following prompt:

In this final exercise, you are invited to write a letter where you offer consejos (advice) or share cuentos (stories) that you think your mother/daughter might find helpful as she moved forward with her educational and/or life endeavors. What would you like for her remember? Conclude by sharing how you might support her in these endeavors.

After the women finished writing their letters, I invited them (for the first and only time) to read their letters aloud for everyone present in the plática to hear. Once each collaborator shared her letter, I invited the mothers and daughters to verbally respond to what they wrote to one another.

After this, I started closing the paired plática by asking the following three questions: (a)

(Daughterscholar's name) is there anything that you want to tell your mom that you haven't told

her before, or expressed enough with regards to your education? (b) (Motherscholar's name) is there anything that you want to tell your daughter that you haven't told her before, or expressed enough with regards to your education? and (c) Are there any questions or anything either of you would like to add that I haven't given you the opportunity to speak to? Once we responded to these questions, I thanked the mothers and daughters for their willingness to collaborate with me throughout the data collection phase. This concluded the second phase of research. This second phase of data collection helped me answer both research questions.

Reflexive Journal

Throughout the research process, I made a commitment to keep a self-reflection journal. Writing reflexive notes is a central method for documenting and analyzing data (Creswell, 2002) and written personal reflections upon this process are viewed as providing insight into how knowledge is produced. I maintained a journal of reflexivity in order to document my perceptions about the study as a way to practice transparency throughout the research process. Specifically, I kept a detailed running record of the settings, sounds, persons, and activities, along with my own interpretations and feelings that emerge throughout the entire research process. I documented ideas and themes that emerged out of the pláticas and epistolary writings (see Appendix G). I also took note of my motherscholars and daughterscholars' mannerisms and prominent characteristics. In these reflexive entries were also analytic memos with information noted about the de Uriarte and Escobedo family educational life narratives. Email exchanges between Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte and Dr. Cristina Bodingter-de Uriarte, as well as letters and reflections from informal pláticas with my sister, Abigail Escobedo, and mother, Cecilia R. Escobedo, were also positioned as central data points in the study. Together, these reflexive notes brought methodological and conceptual clarity to the research process. Now that I

described both stages of research, I summarize my data collection tools.

Summary of Data Collection Tools

The table below (Table 4) is a summary of the data collection tools, the rationale for each tool, what theoretical framework influences the use of each tool, and what research question(s) each tool can answer.

Table 4

Data Collection Tools for Motherscholars and Daughterscholars

Data Collection Tool	Rationale	Theoretical Framework	Research Question(s) it Addresses
Individual Plática	To understand how they make sense of their raced, gendered, classed, and individual journeys through the U.S. education system.	Chicana Feminist Epistemology CRT in Education	RQ 1
Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology (CRFEM)	To offer the motherscholars and daughterscholars a space to inscribe hand-written self-reflections, notes, advice for their mother-daughter counterparts.	Chicana Feminist Epistemology	RQ 1 & RQ 2
Mother-Daughter Group Plática	To engage mother and daughter in a dialogue about the differences and similarities in their individual accounts, to better understand their joint experiences in college, and to share and discuss their journal entries.	Chicana Feminist Epistemology CRT in Education	RQ1 & RQ2
My Self-Reflexive Journal	To practice self-reflection as both a researcher and participant in this study.	CRT in Education & Chicana Feminist Epistemology	RQ1 & RQ2

Analyses and Interpretation of Data

I analyzed my data using a modified grounded theory approach (Calderón, 2008; Malagón, Pérez Huber, & Vélez, 2009) informed by Critical Race Theory in Education and Chicana/Latina Feminist theory because I was intent on generating theories informed by my collaborator's lived experiences. Corbin & Strauss (1990) understand grounded theory as an analytic process,

inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (p. 23).

A modified grounded theory calls for researchers to take an abductive approach to data analysis, rather than a distinctly inductive or deductive approach. Given the phenomenological nature of this research, I was not interested in proving a theory to reify the importance of the Chicana/Latina mother-daughter bond. As I noted in the Review of Literature, existing research already affirmed the significance of the mother-daughter relationship for Chicana/Latina students. Instead, I was interested in nuancing our raced, gendered, and classed understanding of the individual and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars by taking an inductive, "ground up," approach. As I have mentioned prior, I entered the research process with my cultural intuition and with extensive knowledge about how systems of oppression and practices of agency and resistance impact Women of Color educational life experiences. As such, I approached the data deductively, cognizant that themes related to oppression, marginalization, resistance, and resilience would emerge from the data. By merging an inductive and deductive approach, I embraced the abductive analytic process. This process took shape across three phases. I explain them below.

PHASE 1: I initiated the analytic process by examining the 17 individual pláticas according to mother-daughter grouping. In other words, I analyzed the daughter's audio/transcript and the first of three epistolary writings (Letter #1) and followed with the mother's audio/transcript and epistolary writing. To analyze the individual pláticas and writings, I took an open coding approach which allowed for themes to emerge organically from the data (Maxwell, 2012). I kept in mind literature about Chicana/Latina education, mother-daughter pedagogies, and carework, but I was open to documenting other codes throughout the process. During this phase, I kept Villenas and Moreno's (2001) conceptualization of mother-daughter pedagogies in mind as I coded for instance of "teaching" and "learning." I also coded for experiences with racism, sexism, classism, and educational marginalization in its varying iterations to address my first research question. Moreover, I was keen to take note of moments where the daughter's and mother's perceptions shifted and aligned. I moved quickly through the data, comparing the daughter's transcripts and writings with that of the mothers. I noted precise descriptor codes and used simple terms to gather an overall understanding of the data pieces in this first round of coding.

In the second round of coding, I took a more focused approach. Here, I began to group the descriptors and codes for each mother-daughter group into themes and patterns that cut across all 17 individual pláticas and all epistolary writings (Letter #1). In this round, my codes became more conceptual in nature and were based on similarities and differences evident across the mother-daughter teams. For example, if I noted that a mother spoke or wrote extensively about how she incorporated her children into her college journey, I would code for that in the daughter's transcript/audio and vice versa. If a daughter talked or wrote a lot about the carework she extended to her family, I coded for that in her mother's transcript/audio and writings. I

continued to code with my research questions in mind by taking note of how race, gender, and class impacted the mothers' and daughters' individual college journeys. I looked for consistency across the pláticas and letters, but also for disagreements that emerged among the mother-daughter sets. I searched for moments when the daughters and mothers indicated moments or experiences of teaching and learning in school, home, and community contexts. After completing the open and focused rounds of coding, I created questions based on the patterns I had noted for each mother-daughter team. These questions were used to facilitate the mother-daughter group pláticas. The questions were also used to clarify ideas that I had begun to develop.

PHASE 2: During the mother-daughter group pláticas I engaged the mothers and daughters in an analysis of the themes I had created based on findings from the first phase of analysis. This member-checking approach allowed for further expansion on themes and ideas. For example, I posed to my collaborators questions like, "You all used social media differently to preserve the mother-daughter bond, can you tell me more about why this form of communication was important for you." I would say things like, "I noted that you both talked about your experiences with microaggressions differently, can we have a joint conversation about this?" and then would share this distinction by quoting directly from their transcripts. More often than not, my collaborators agreed with my analysis, but they always added to my understanding of their individual and joint journeys in the group setting. Discussing experiences with race and racism, racial microaggressions, guilt, shame, and sacrifices were topic areas we had the most difficulty speaking on. However, from these challenging conversations blossomed new insights about the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint educational experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars. I speak most to these areas of contestation in Chapters Six and Seven.

After the 7 mother-daughter pláticas were complete and all 42 epistolary writings constructed (this includes Letter #1, #2, and #3) I repeated the analytic process from phase one. I did open coding first and then focused coding on all the mother-daughter transcripts/audio and the letters. During this phase, I kept in mind the previous codes I had noted, but I also noted new themes and codes. Central to this phase was engaging an explicit comparative approach across all seven of the mother-daughter pláticas and all the epistolary writings (Letter #1, #2, and #3). I completed this phase by combining themes into categories and subcategories through axial coding (Saldaña, 2013). I was working with a significant amount of qualitative data, so the axial coding approach allowed me to “sort, synthesize, and organize large amounts of data and reassemble them in new ways after coding” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). At this stage, I began to address my second research question by theorizing about Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies, as well as the carework (Chicana/Latina motherwork and daughterwork) that my collaborators expended during their joint time in college. During this stage I continued to a code for “conflicts,” and “tensions,” during the joint college years. I made a list of the actions and behaviors foundational to a motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogy based on this process. I also started to create a list of overlapping experiences with racism, sexism, and classism evident in the mothers and daughters’ individual and joint time in college to theorize the motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena. This approach helped me began to answer both research questions. The lists I created were intricate and very detailed, so I had to narrow them down to construct a more comprehensive and streamlined coding scheme.

PHASE 3: After crafting these lists, I went through the 24 plática transcripts again (both the individual and paired pláticas) and the 42 epistolary writings to carry out a line-by-line analysis. I developed too many codes, so I proceeded with a line-by-line analysis. This approach

helped me identify themes and codes most pronounced across the data. I also revisited the plática audio to take note of tone inflections and emotion evident only by listening to the audio. This practice helped me further identify themes most salient to each collaborator individually, and to the women more broadly. Finally, I complemented this analysis phase by I revisited all my reflexive journal entries to complement the analysis. In these reflexive entries were analytic memos with information noted about the de Uriarte and Escobedo educational life narratives. Email exchanges between Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte and Dr. Cristina Bodingter-de Uriarte, as well as letters and reflections from pláticas my sister, mother, Dr. de Uriarte, and I had through the research process (noted in my reflexive journal) were also analyzed using an open and focused coding approach. This abductive, three-part coding approach helped me more accurately present a robust narrative about my research collaborator's educational life experiences.

During the data analysis and writing phases, I drew on my cultural intuition for support in translating what was noted in the data and how it would be presented in the final product. Here, I use the word “translation” in two ways: (1) literally, with regards to making literal Spanish to the English language (and vice versa) translations, and (2) figuratively as a reference to translating community voices so they become accessible in academic spaces. In her 2014 research, Flores Carmona theorizes about the complex processes Chicana/Latina researchers engage in when translating voices in their research. She urges us to be critical of the process of both translating and editing our participants' voices when she says:

As mujeres Chicanas or Latinas, we also participate in our communities playing contradicting roles as educational researchers coming from the academy and as translators and interpreters for our communities. We play the role of writing our people into academia—of translating them from everyday language to academic discourses. (p. 115).

I agree with Flores Carmona, Chicana/Latina academics are translators and interpreters of many cultures and experiences. As I made literal and figurative translations from Spanish to English, I was conscious of the fact that Spanish words and phrases are not directly translatable. When this was the case, I kept in mind Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, and Flores Carmona (2012) who prompt us to, “be cautious to translate conceptually rather than literally because in translating particular terms, nuances get lost, and we run the risk of reproducing language marginalization,” (p. 365). To maintain the essence and integrity of my collaborators’ voice, I incorporated their language verbatim (be it in English, Spanish, or some combination of both) into the birthstory. I offered clarifying English translations for non-Spanish speaking readers but was keen to draw on my cultural intuition to translate conceptually, rather than literally.

Ultimately, my triangulation of multiple data sources and my collaboration with the mothers and daughters allowed me to theorize what I will present in the following chapters, a Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory. The birthstory reads as such- a historical narrative, a story, about 22 Chicana/Latina scholars and their raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences in college. To construct this birthstory, I weave into the mothers’ and daughters’ stories the perspectives of scholars who help me engage an analytic discussion about the socio-historical and socio-political conditions present at various periods throughout my collaborators’ lifetimes. As I craft this narrative, I take a chronological and thematic approach to document the lineage of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomenon in the U.S. and its more contemporary manifestations. The birthstory framing also allows me to theorize about the contours of a Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogy. Across the four-chapter birthstory that follows, I examine the educational life experiences of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters during three historical time periods: (a) the

1960s to 1970s, (b) the 1980s to 1990s, and (c) the 2000s to 2020s. In the following chapter, I designate 1973 as the birth of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena in the U.S. and I initiate a discussion about the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint educational life experiences of the first motherscholar-daughterscholar pair who attended college jointly in the 1970s: the de Uriarte family.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTRODUCING THE CHICANA/LATINA MOTHERSCHOLAR-
DAUGHTERSCHOLAR PHENOMENA: THE GENESIS POINT, 1960s–1970s

My husband and I were both were going to Rio Hondo Community College when I was expecting [in the early 1990s,] . . . Priscilla was almost about to be born in the classroom. . . I was already in labor, and I just needed to finish my finals . . . [The] doctor said, “You’re two centimeters dilated!” I [responded], “Ahorita regreso, I’ll be right back, I’m just going to go take my finals” . . . And I went and took the finals.

(Francisca Valencia, Mother to Priscilla and Paulina Valencia)

This [college journey began in 2018 and] is all new because Mom is exploring new territories. Everything is new, so I try to be more compassionate [and I remind her] “Explore who you are, Mom. It’s a rebirth to yourself.”

(Cindy Luquin, Daughter to Erika R. Peña)

Every Mother-Daughter of Color narrative begins with a birth story. Birth stories, presented as recollections of human childbirths, or as memoirs detailing new life beginnings, bridge womanist experiences across familial and cultural generations. I begin this chapter by highlighting two birthing accounts—one from Francisca Valencia who details the moment she (re)claimed her scholar identity in the minutes leading up to the birth of her eldest daughter, Priscilla, in 1991. And the second, from Cindy, who lovingly encouraged her mother to see the college going process as an opportunity for self-actualization and rebirth in 2018. Francisca and Cindy are not biologically related to one another, yet they both reference mother-daughter (re)birthing experiences which materialized 80 miles, two decades, and familial generations apart. I bring Francisca and Cindy’s stories in conversation with one another because they recenter the maternal and daughteral in discussions about Chicana/Latina education.

(Re)birthing experiences, such as the aforementioned, form the basis for what I am calling the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena. I operationalize the motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena as one where mothers and daughters enroll in and

progress through higher education channels at times that overlapped In this chapter, I begin a theorization about the origins of the U.S. Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena by introducing Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, motherscholar and Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas, Austin (UT Austin); and her daughter, Dr. Cristina Bodinger-de Uriarte, Professor Emeritus at California State University at Los Angeles (CSULA). Dr. de Uriarte is the first Latina to have ever gained admission to Yale University as a graduate student, and together, the de Uriarte women are the first mother-daughter duo to share Yale University graduation ceremonies (1978). Their individual and joint educational story is a cornerstone in the Chicana/Latina educational historiography because the women are, to my knowledge, one of the earliest examples of a motherscholar-daughterscholar pair to have attended college in the United States at times that converged.

In the early stages of data analysis and in a personal email correspondence dated June 19, 2020, Dr. de Uriarte posed a very important question to me:

How do you plan to handle historical periods [when analyzing Chicana/Latina mother-daughter stories]? . . . When I finally got to college in Southern California in my 20s . . . I and another woman about the same age were singled out at graduation as “the older women.” We were an anomaly. Anomalies are often considered to be out of step, disrupters, radical.

In crafting my response to this inquiry, I am reminded of Dr. Patricia Hill Collins (1994) who states, “for Native American, African American, Hispanic, and Asian American women, motherhood cannot be analyzed in isolation from its context” (p. 371). I would argue the same for daughterhood and scholarhood; the sociopolitical and sociohistorical conditions under which they unfold are important parts of their educational life histories. I respond to Dr. de Uriarte’s inquiry by constructing a timeline of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar experiences in higher education. In this four-chapter historical narrative, I craft what I believe is a nuanced account of Chicana/Latina higher education resilience in the U.S. by theorizing about the

Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena. I call this four-part series *A Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory (1972–2021)*.

Chicana historian Emma Pérez (1999) describes historiography as “the writing and the study of history, yet in that writing theories are constructed, albeit unwittingly. The writing of history... is the space in which historians build upon what has been written, thereby constructing theories that will become the prominent ideologies of any given area of study” (p. 9). In this birth story, I designate the 1970s as the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar point of genesis and I name the de Uriarte family as the pioneers who initiated the birth of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena. By tracing the origins of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena back to 1973 and making broader historical connections across time and space, I show that Women of Color motherscholar-daughterscholar configurations are more common than we might believe them to be. Though we might think of them as “anomalies,” they do exist, but their histories have yet to be systematically preserved and documented.

Throughout this chapter, as in this historical narrative at large, I highlight key events that characterize Mercedes’ and Cristina’s individual and collective time in college. I began by first introducing Mercedes and I speak on her individual journey to and through college in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I then transition to introduce Cristina and identify key components central to her higher education journey at Yale University between the mid to late 1970s. Finally, I speak briefly to the joint mother-daughter years (1973–1978). Analyzing the de Uriarte mother-daughter journey at the individual and joint level helps me historicize present-day understandings about the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena which are developed further in the next three chapters.

Introducing Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte

Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, a self-identified Latina and Mexican American woman, was born in the United States in the 1930s, but raised and formally educated in Mexico City, Mexico. Though she has acquired such accolades throughout her lifetime as becoming, “the highest-ranking Latina in mainstream print newspapers [and] a tenured professor at one of the nations’ most respected universities” (de Uriarte, 1999, p. 32), Mercedes is first and foremost the proud daughter to Guijermo (William) Antonio de Uriarte, a Mexican-born gentleman who deeply valued education. The oldest of three children, William crossed the Mexican border into the United States eager to complete his post-secondary studies during a time when the Mexican Revolution of the early 1900s disrupted educational initiatives and ultimately led to Mexican school closures. While continuing his secondary studies in the U.S. and business courses at Pennsylvania State University, William formed a relationship with Mercedes’ mother, Frances Lee, and both wed. Of that relationship, Mercedes was born. Mercedes has very vivid recollections about her life growing up in Mexico City. Mercedes enjoyed the fruits of an emerging middle-class lifestyle and unlike many of her female contemporaries, had the privilege of acquiring a primary and secondary education in Mexico. She is the eldest granddaughter on her paternal side of the family, and she graduated from the American High School, in Mexico City. This early academic trajectory catapulted her into a lifelong career in the Academe. Though Mercedes spent a great deal of her youth in Mexico, immediately following her high school graduation, she returned to the United States, the place of her birth. Before long, Mercedes became a teenage mother to Cristina and John in the mid 1960s. In this transition to motherhood, blossomed a renewed interest in pursuing her studies at the post-secondary level.

Social Activism and Social Policy of the 1960s and 1970s

The mid to late 1960s (when Mercedes first considered enrolling in college in the U.S.) were a historic time when federally backed support for higher education became more widely accepted. Growing concerns about equalizing educational opportunities led to an influx of newly created opportunities for working-class folk, women, and People of Color (Gándara, 1995; Karabel, 1981). Gándara (1995) describes this era as one where, “a heightened emphasis on government support and minority recruitment in higher education, and a cultural “valuing” of ethnic diversity...had a substantial impact on minority college attendance” (p. 17). For example, in 1958, the Woodrow Wilson Administration passed the National Defense Act (NDA) which established the legitimacy of federal funding of higher education and made it such that citizen individuals interested in advancing their post-secondary credentials gained access to funding in the form of low-cost, federally backed student loans. Though white women benefited most from this bill (Delgado Bernal, 1999), it established the funding infrastructure that women and Students of Color reaped the benefits of several years later. Building on the legacy of the NDA, the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) was established to further equitized access to post-secondary schooling for lower- and middle-income families with U.S. citizenry and/or residency status. The HEA was unique in that it designated a budget for loans, grants, and other support programs such as the Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) system.

Though these earlier pieces of federal legislation would have theoretically broadened access to post-secondary schooling for citizen and resident individuals living in the U.S. across racial, ethnic, gender, and classed lines, Chicana/o and Latina/o students still endured the brunt of academic exclusion. For example, Los Angeles County had the largest Latina/o community in the United States with more than 130,000 students enrolled in the public school system, but

academic prospects for this racialized ethnic group were grim (Delgado Bernal, 1998). High school graduation rates in Los Angeles County public schools were among the lowest in the country, while push-out rates were disproportionately high. Students of Color in these communities also had limited access to college-readiness courses and to teachers and administrators who mentored and supported them in pushing for a post-secondary education; class sizes were also especially high (Aguilar-Hernandez, 2014; Blackwell, 2011; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Partida, 2021). Growing concerns about the inferior nature of Chicana/o schooling led Communities of Color at large, and Chicana/o communities in particular to organize and demand systemic change.

Youth of Color played central roles in shaping movements aimed at dismantling structural hierarchies and social stratifications across the United States during this era. Street politics and mass protests were characteristic of the time, but Student of Color-initiated and Student of Color-led movements were especially prominent in the fight for social and educational equity. In predominantly Chicana/o and Latina/o communities, these student-initiated movements were influenced by social and political forces including the larger Chicana/o Movement, the Black Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, Anti-Vietnam War sentiments, and the federal governments' War on Poverty. Expanding economic opportunities for low-income individuals and People of Color also served as a driving force for combating poverty and racial inequality (Aguilar-Hernandez, 2014; Blackwell, 2011; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Partida, 2021).

For many years, Latina/o and Chicana/o community members across the nation made unsuccessful attempts to create change and improve the inferior education system through the "proper" channels (Delgado Bernal, 1998). However, in March 1968, Chicana/o and Latina/o

high school and college students in East Los Angeles organized a historic protest in opposition to inferior schooling conditions⁶⁶. During the 1968 East Los Angeles Blowouts, or Walkouts as they are simultaneously known, “well over ten thousand Chicana/o students walked out of East Los Angeles high schools to protest inferior conditions. The students boycotted classes and presented a list of . . . thirty-six demands, including smaller class sizes, bilingual education, and end to the vocational tracking of Chicana/o students, more emphasis on Chicano history, and community control of schools” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 83). This protest demonstrated that Chicana/o and Latina/o students were engaged in serious efforts to challenge educational inequalities and were invested in school reform. This protest inspired Chicana/o and Latina/o students around the nation, including in Houston, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona to organize in their own communities as well (Partida, 2021; San Miguel, 2005).

At the national level, Chicanas/Latinas began organizing to specifically address challenges related to Chicana/Latina secondary and post-secondary access and retention. For example, at the 1973 National Women’s Political Caucus Convention, the Chicana Caucus⁶⁷ submitted a resolution requesting that the organization refocus legislative efforts to include: (a) conducting research centered around the Chicana/Latina educational needs, (b) recruiting Chicanas/Latina to higher education, (c) providing financial support to fund Chicana/Latina education, (d) providing and extending tutorial and counseling programs designed specifically for Chicanas/Latinas, (e) incorporating Chicana/Latina culture into educational systems, and (f)

⁶⁶ The Blowouts were centered at five predominately Chicana/o high schools in East Los Angeles and started on different days during the first week of March 1968. Estimates of 10,000-20,000 students protested the inferior quality of education for a week and a half. On March 11, the students presented to the School Board a list of 36 demands (Aguilar-Hernandez, 2014; Blackwell, 2011; Delgado Bernal, 1998).

⁶⁷ This Chicana Caucus was made up of sixty women from seven states across the U.S., including Texas, New Mexico, Illinois, and California.

including Chicanas/Latinas in all Affirmative Action activity (Chapa, 1973; Delgado Bernal, 1999). Through their advocacy, the women of the Chicana Caucus shaped national policy to address uniquely Chicana/Latina-centric educational challenges. These events played a crucial role in the Chicana/o movement and the broader struggle for educational equity in the U.S. Southwest. Without a doubt, Community of Color activism and social policies were opening the doors to higher education for Chicanas/os and Latinas/os at large, but discussions about equitizing educational opportunities for Chicana/Latina mothers and Chicana/Latina Students with Dependents were often dismal. As a result, limited were the financial resources available through federal and local channels for Motherscholars of Color and Students with Dependents. Mercedes de Uriarte affirmed this to be true in our correspondence with one another.

Mercedes' Undergraduate Journey

Mercedes shared of her growing aspirations to enroll in community college as a parenting student in the 1960s and 1970s that, “Financial aid was restricted to those who would graduate before the age of twenty-seven” (de Uriarte, 1999, p. 33). Because she was nearing her thirties and navigating life as a young mother, Mercedes deeply lamented that she might have challenges funding her schooling beyond her twenty-seventh birthday given that “women had very limited economic rights . . . no rights to a credit card, no rights to a mortgage, and no rights to student loans through many private banks,”. Despite these dire conditions and the looming possibility of entering into a financially fragile state, Mercedes initiated her enrollment in Fullerton College (Fullerton, California) when her youngest child, John began grade school.

Mercedes started her post-secondary journey at Fullerton College before her successful transfer to California State University at Fullerton (CSUF) five years later. During her time at CSUF, Mercedes juggled such responsibilities as providing for her family, setting time aside to

spend with her spouse, and being a present mother to her two children. She worked strenuously to achieve a dual Bachelor's degree in American Studies and Comparative Literature, and soon became interested in continuing her post-secondary studies at the graduate level. While mothering as a first-generation college student, Mercedes applied to eight graduate schools and was accepted to seven of the eight. The only exception was the University of Texas, Austin (UTA), the same institution where she would later become the first Woman and Person of Color ever to be awarded tenure in what was formerly the Department of Journalism and presently the School of Journalism and Media.

In the spring of 1972, Mercedes and her two children made significant educational strides both individually, and as a family collective such that, "By the time [she] earned two BA degrees, three graduations fell within the same week- mine, my daughter's from high school, and my son's from middle school". This triple graduation would foreshadow the motherscholar-daughterscholar dynamic which would unfold for the de Uriarte family in several years' time in New Haven, Connecticut, at Yale University.

Mercedes made the long journey eastward to begin her graduate journey at Yale University during a time when Chicana/Latina enrollment in college was disproportionately low. Data from the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics reveals that Hispanic women made up a mere 1.9% of the female graduate enrollment in Fall of 1976, while Black women made up 5.7%, and white women made up 85.3%. Data disaggregated by parenting status, was not collected at the time, but information detailing the percentage of graduate and undergraduate Students with Dependents could have been helpful for painting a more nuanced portrait of the educational state of Motherscholars and scholars with dependents in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mercedes's Transition to Graduate School at Yale University

Mercedes' bore the brunt of raced and gendered maternal microaggressions (Vega, 2019) even before she enrolled in her graduate program at Yale in the Fall of 1972. Dr. Christine Vega (2019) defines maternal microaggressions as, "Everyday encounters with racism and sexism at the crux of motherhood and student status" (p. 103). These every day, layered assaults directed toward the brown, female body can have long-term physiological, mental, and emotional lasting effect by the receiver (Solorzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Vega, 2019). Studies in white motherhood (Hays, 1996; Swanson & Johnston, 2003) and white women themselves frequently name the patriarchy and sexism as structures deeply imbued within the academe (Caballero et al., 2017; Matias & Nishi, 2018). They contend, patriarchal and sexist cultural practices make it such that female graduate students (regardless of racial and ethnic identification) and faculty members are regularly "warned" that should they become pregnant or even hint that they may want to have children while in the academy, they run the risk of academic failure (Caballero et al., 2017; Matias & Nishi, 2018; Téllez, 2015). However, transmitting these messages of exclusion are fundamentally sexist and racially microaggressive when we look to the experiences of Motherscholars of Color. In both a personal phone conversation that took place five decades post her admission to Yale in July, 2020 and in a book chapter, de Uriarte (1999) shared:

In a preview interview at Yale, a female dean of students had suggested that I reconsider graduate school there. "You people do better in the Southwest," she said. And the idea that I was bringing children with me met with her strong disapproval. I was a rare sole-support single-parent female graduate student in Yale's history, although female [graduate students] had been attending Yale officially since 1892.⁶⁸ (p. 36)

⁶⁸ The Yale Graduate School first admitted women in 1892. Twenty-three of those admitted enrolled in the school. More information about the History of Women at Yale University can be found at Celebrate Women at Yale (2021) and Miller (2019).

I argue, Mercedes' racial microaggressive interaction with the female dean of students exemplifies how institutional gatekeepers such as high-ranking administrators uphold the patriarchy and racist ideological structures in ways that can profoundly impact academic decision making for women who are mothers, and/or for women who might become mothers at some point during their educational journey. This reflection also unveils how Motherscholars of Color experience exclusionary and oppressive treatment on the basis of their presumed racial, ethnic, and aged identities. Arguably, in her response, the female dean of students communicated to Mercedes that a person like her—someone of Mexican American ancestry, a woman, and a mothering student—was not welcomed as a scholar at Yale University. By using defamatory language such as “you people,” and dissuading Mercedes to enroll at Yale on the basis of her presumed cultural “incompatibility” with the cultural and geographic realities of living in New Haven, the female dean of students perpetuated and reproduced deficit tropes that position People of Color, Mothers of Color, and working-class folk as incompetent and unworthy of entering into privileged academic space which are often exclusionary for Communities of Color (Caballero et al., 2017; Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Téllez, 2015; Vega, 2019). I contend, microaggressions like these upheld the early exclusion of Chicana/Latina women at Yale University. Though she did not know it at the time, Mercedes became the first Latina to have ever been admitted to Yale's Graduate School and is one of the earliest Chicanas/Latinas to have experienced a maternal microaggression at Yale. Her self-advocacy and resistance during moments of aggression and exclusionary push out are indeed historic because they form part of an incredible time in the history of Chicana/Latina education at Yale University.

For years, Black and Chicana feminist scholars have led intellectual discussions about mothering in and of itself (Collins, 2009; Lorde, 2007; Moraga, 2019; Moraga & Anzaldúa,

1981), and more recently, of navigating motherhood as Scholars of Color (Caballero et al., 2017; Evans, 2007; Vega, 2019). In their anthology, the Chicana M(other)work Collective (2019) reminds us that Mothers of Color have endured the brunt of systematic exclusion because the Academy is founded upon and reproduces the raced-cis-heteropatriarchy in the everyday. Solorzano and Pérez-Huber (2020) argue this system is maintained through the imparting of racial microaggressions. Indeed, everyday microaggressive slights directed at Mothers of Color, such as the aforementioned, uphold maternal phobia while impacting the livelihoods, health, and careers of Motherscholars of Color (Vega, 2019).

Layered racial microaggressive attacks also came from Mercedes' colleagues, specifically the white women in her graduate cohort. Mercedes notes, "their greatest complaint, besides my alleged cultural incompatibility, was that I put my family first. To prove my worthiness for Yale, they suggested that I limit interactions with my son and daughter to certain periods of the day, to be determined by a sign-up sheet on my bedroom door" (de Uriarte, 1999, p. 36). During a phone conversation with me in August 2020, Mercedes elaborated on this by saying her white, female colleagues instructed her to lock the bedroom and/or office door on her children so she would have a quiet space to complete her school work. Yet again, this example is evidence of how Mercedes fell victim to and became the target of a raced, gendered, and maternal microaggressive assault. In this recollection, it is evident that Mercedes was shamed and marginalized in her decision to have become both a mother and a graduate student at the flagship university. The remedy to Mercedes' "cultural incompatibility," her white colleagues argued, was for Mercedes to engage with her children, in the same way she might engage with a colleague or professor: by setting up appointments.

In her interactions with her white colleagues as well as with the female Dean of Students, Mercedes was effectively taught and “warned” that her “brownness” and her motherhood do not mix with scholarly life. In both instances, Mercedes’ was shamed and encouraged to fragment her intersectional identities as a mother and academic by essentially choosing one identity over the other. Under this flawed logic, failing to create a separation between the domestic and public/business-world (i.e., through creating a sign-up sheet to designate time spent with each child and/or by making a decision not to have children at all), would compromise her academic success (Boyd, 1997; Matias & Nishi, 2018). Without a doubt, these raced, gendered, and classed microaggressive attacks perpetuated and reproduced a sort of hidden script that posits, if one chooses to be a mother then one is better suited for the domestic world and not the professional one.

From a legal standpoint, the Federal Civil Rights Law, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) protects pregnant and or parenting students enrolled in any private or public institution in the United States from discrimination. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex—including pregnancy and parental status—in educational programs and activities” (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Protection includes all private and public institutions that are federally funded. Even though Title IX was established the very year Mercedes enrolled at Yale (1972), professors, faculty, and staff, including peers, systematically discriminated against, harassed, and shamed pregnant and parenting students. This reaffirms the fact that raced, gendered, classed and maternal microaggressive expressions have historically superseded the law and have thereby perpetuated the systematic exclusion of Mothers and Students of Color in the U.S. for decades. Mercedes’s vivid recollection about painful events that unfolded in her lifetime almost five decades ago clearly illustrates how

everyday racism, sexism, and maternal phobia directed at the brown, female, mothering body in the Academe has a historical lineage that dates to at least the 1970s. These layered microaggressive attacks also shed light on some of the challenges that come with mothering, while brown, and of scholaring, while mothering.

Mercedes navigated the culture of raced, gendered, and maternal exclusion with support from extramural programs designed to retain scholars from historically marginalized communities. As was previously noted, Chicana/o and Latina/o students were vastly underrepresented in higher education systems across the nation in the early 1970s. To remedy this disproportionately representation, colleges and universities actively sought the participation of historically underrepresented groups by establishing programs and devoting funds for recruitment purposes (Gándara, 1995). Think tanks and foundations especially contributed to efforts in equitizing higher education for historically undeserved racial and ethnic groups (Gándara, 1995). The Ford Foundation was especially integral for helping to create the material conditions which allowed Mercedes to pursue a graduate degree at Yale University.

In 1972, when she arrived to Yale, Mercedes was among one of the first women to have been awarded the prestigious Ford Foundation Fellowship for Minorities. This fellowship fund was established only two years prior in 1980 and was created to foster the development of a diverse and talented, qualified, and innovative professoriate ⁶⁹ by offering support to fellows in the form of tuition, a \$300 book allowance, a stipend of \$350 a month, and in Mercedes' case, an additional \$50 each month, for each child (de Uriarte, 1999). Though the Ford stipend did not stretch across all of Mercedes' expenses, the \$50 per child monthly addition to Mercedes' Ford

⁶⁹ For mor information see https://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/pgasite/documents/webpage/pga_196915.pdf

funding package was especially important because (a) it validated Mercedes' identity as a parenting student, (b) it repositioned Mercedes' children as central rather than peripheral stakeholders in her graduate journey, and (c) it situated families in general and educational programs like the Ford Foundation as equal partners in maximizing the potential for Families and Communities of Color to thrive.

When diversity recruitment and retention programs, such as the Ford Foundation, and higher education institutions construct wellbeing funding programs and opportunities with parenting students and their families in mind, the resulting structure is more inclusive and supportive of both familial generations. Such was the case for Mercedes who because of funding from the Ford Foundation and from federal funds like the Pell Grant, gained access to the privileged programs and cultural experiences Yale University had to offer. Indeed, funding streams, programs, and policies have historically operated separately and in a disconnected fashion. Much work could have been done in the past (and can be now undertaken) to align and intertwine these funding streams, but this does not negate the fact that the Ford Fellowship for Minorities and the Pell Grants really helped to build the de Uriarte family's capacity for economic stability. Moreover, funding support ameliorated some of the institutional forms of exclusion that Mercedes and her daughter, Cristina, newly admitted to Yale as an undergraduate, endured during their joint time in college.

Cristina's Undergraduate Journey at Yale University

Mercedes and her daughter officially became colleagues in the Fall of 1973 when Cristina was admitted to Yale in the fifth cohort of undergraduate women ever to be admitted to the university. Four years prior to Cristina's arrival, in September 1969, Yale opened its doors to

the first class of female undergraduates (Celebrate Women at Yale, 2021). To prepare the campus for this demographic and cultural shift:

Yale installed full-length mirrors in the women's dorms and, to the dismay of many men, banned nudity in the gym. But there were not women's studies classes, no women's competitive sports and little idea how to support women at a place that was, in 1969, the oldest all-male college in the country. (Miller, 2019)

Undergraduate men outnumbered undergraduate women seven to one as part of a university quota system, and only 48 of 817 faculty in the Faculty of Arts and Science were women in 1969; of those 48, only 2 held tenured positions (Miller, 2019). Even more polarizing was the fact that Cristina entered such a homogeneous campus where:

Only 75 Latinx [undergraduates] were accepted among 5,000 undergraduates. There [also] was no nearby Latinx community and no undergraduate Mexican-American or Chicana student association "house" (though the black students had one). We did have MECHA, but it was problematic and very sexist at that time.

Without a doubt, Yale University was wholly unprepared to support incoming undergraduate women, and even more unprepared to support incoming Chicana/Latina undergraduates.

Cristina entered Yale University in the Fall of 1973 equipped with a full-tuition, four-year academic scholarship. Though she and her mother attended the same institution, Cristina did not live with Mercedes; she lived instead in the undergraduate dormitories. During her time at Yale, Cristina remained high-profile in her cohort and left an indelible mark on the institutional culture. For example, she participated in the Intensive Studies Degree Program where she crafted a senior thesis titled, "The Role of the Intelligentsia in the Mexican Revolution." When she was not studying or working to fund her housing, Cristina played a critical role in establishing what then-Dean of Trumbull College, William Scott Long, called an, "intellectual salon at Yale, that was both interdisciplinary and unusual in its scope of exchange." Cristina did this by:

Negotiating access to a large table in the closed Trumbull dining hall between lunch & dinner for us to meet on weekdays to discuss social and behavioral science, history, and philosophy—the dining manager even kept the coffee filled for us—and by arranging

(with a close friend) to meet with colleagues [one] night a week to discuss arts & literature after-hours in a burger lunch-joint run by Yale [Business School] students.

Finally, she helped establish a student group called COBRA that fought for “an open and transparent budget at Yale, during the long worker’s strike in 1974.” Unfortunately, the group “dissolved when the administration threatened us with academic probation.” Cristina’s undergraduate endeavors were remarkable because of their scholarly strong suit and political impact. Moreover, the fact that Cristina was but one of very few undergraduate women on campus, and one of even fewer Chicana/Latina undergraduate students at Yale, makes these feat even more critical to highlight in this birthstory because they reify just how important Chicana/Latina scholar-activists are for transforming institutional cultures.

Collectively, these undergraduate experiences formed a valuable part of Cristina’s time at Yale and informed her decision to continue growing, “as a [Sociologist with an expertise in] culture, arts, literature, music & media... and even later to my focus on digital culture.” However, these responsibilities also made it such that Cristina (much like her mother,) was incredibly busy juggling academic, professional, and extra-curricular workloads. Sometimes the Uriarte women “met for meals,” but in the grand scope of life and school, they interacted very sparingly with one another during their joint college years. Though they undertook separate paths while occupying the same physical space at Yale, they learned how to juggle school, work, and family in a way that made sense to them personally and professionally.

The de Uriarte Scholar Family Experience

Within three years of Mercedes’ time in her graduate program, and two years into Cristina’s time at Yale, John Bodinger de Uriarte (the youngest of the de Uriarte family) joined the women as an undergraduate scholar, albeit at a different institution. Much like Cristina, John was admitted to Vassar College (Dutchess County, New York) in one of the first freshman

classes to accept men (de Uriarte, 1999). Despite their collective accolades and academic successes, the family at large would continue to experience disenfranchisement from the institutional powers at be. For example, formal and informal structural mechanism in the form of Federal Financial Aid processes systematically mediated the de Uriarte family's experiences with raced and maternal microaggressions. Mercedes (1999) noted:

Within three years [of my time as a graduate student], all three of us [me, my son, and daughter] were in college and each academic term, when I filled in the Pell form box that asked the size of the family and how many were in higher education, I carefully answered: 3. With an asterisk I footnoted the entry and added an explanation. Regardless, each year the applications were returned for correction since the programmed computer check did not accept that all members of the family could be in school at the same time. Money was always delayed. (p. 35)

Though Mercedes endlessly sought to make visible her lived experiences as a scholar-family throughout her college journey and to advocate for support in the form of FAFSA funding, the FAFSA application process invisibilized her lived reality as a motherscholar to two college-going children. I denote this experience as one of the first documented cases of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar (and son-scholar) erasure.

Indeed, this example draws linkages between past efforts to exclude Chicana/Latina mothers, and (young and adult) children from academic spaces, and present day attempts to continue this pattern of familial erasure and marginalization. Moreover, this recollection brings to light the connectedness of social class, educational policies and procedures (i.e., procedures tied to the Pell Grant), and the cultural deficit paradigms that fueled the racialization of Chicana/o and Latina/o students in the 1970s and early 1980s. In spite of this erasure, the de Uriarte trio worked strenuously to reach their post-secondary degree goals of pursuing Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

The de Uriarte Legacy

During her graduate journey, Mercedes physically moved from New Haven in 1977 to accept a job offer from the Los Angeles Times as a lead editor. A year after this move, Mercedes returned to Yale to participate in the same 1978 commencement ceremony as her daughter. That year, Cristina graduated Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a double minor in Computer Science and Research Methodology. In the three years following the joint 1978 Yale graduation, Cristina worked with think tanks. However, by Fall of 1988, Cristina was right back in the classroom, en route to earning her PhD in Sociology from Harvard University (class of 1989). After graduating from Vassar College with double major in Anthropology/Sociology and English (1981), John progressed in his studies to earn a Master's degree in Social Anthropology (1995) and a PhD in Social Anthropology (2003) from the University of Texas at Austin. Mercedes eventually also earned her PhD from Yale University.

The de Uriarte women are to my knowledge, the first motherscholar-daughterscholar pair on record and their familial legacy would set a precedent for Chicanas/Latinas to follow across familial generations and geographic locales. Twenty years after that joint 1978 mother-daughter graduation, Mercedes was invited back to Yale University to give a talk in honor of the Yale "Recognition of Women Project." At the event, Mercedes learned she was the first Latina accepted into the Graduate Program in the University's history and the first Latina to earn a PhD at Yale. She also learned that she and her daughter made history as the first mother-daughter pair to have graduated together from Yale University. I argue, the de Uriarte women merit recognition for their work as students, but also as faculty. Drs. de Uriarte and Bodinger-de Uriarte are, to my knowledge, some of the first Chicana/Latina mother-daughter faculty pairs in

the U.S. historical record. Throughout their tenure as faculty members, Cristina and Mercedes have collaborated with one another in different ways. Cristina noted:

The media focus is the one complimentary I had with my mother, as she was interested in Media and Journalism Studies with an American/Latin-American Studies lens, and I was interested in media and popular culture with a social/psychological sociology of work and production lens. This is why we were able to do a joint research/publication twice. It is also why I invited her to guest lecture in my Sociology of Media class at UCSD & why she asked me to guest lecture on Media and Marxism in her class at UCSB and UCLA.

Ultimately, the de Uriarte's educational narratives, in all their complexities, show us that policies, place, and historical time matter because they influence the way Women and Families of Color traverse and navigate the U.S. academe. By placing the de Uriarte story within a larger narrative of motherscholar-daughterscholar struggle and resistance, we see that Chicana/Latina maternal and daughteral educational trajectories begin to parallel one another well into the 1980s and 1990s. This is the topic of interest for the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE MOTHERS AND THEIR EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCES, 1980s–

1990s

Dear Selena,

Initially, I pursued higher education because my dad always pushed [his children to become] “professionales” . . . But my true motivation was that I was a true nerd. I loved learning, I thought school was fun and I was surrounded by a group of best friends who shared the same love learning. All of us now “Golden Girls,” knew we were going to college. And we all did. School excited me.

(Socorro Genoveva Nino, Mother to Selena Nino)

Mercedes’ and Cristina’s educational life story provided context about what it was like for a Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pair to attend college in the years leading up to the early 1980s. Using the de Uriarte story as a springboard, I continue this narrative by introducing the motherscholars and speaking, as Socorro Genoveva does in the opening epigraph, on their early experiences in college. The women I introduce in this section hail from humble, working class and immigrant families, but they built upon Mercedes’ and Cristina’s legacy of academic success by entering into and working their way through college during the 1980s and 1990s. The mothers never crossed paths with one another during this 20-year time span, but running threads which cut across all their educational trajectories make their experiences relatively comparable. As was the case with the de Uriarte women, the motherscholars’ educational and life decisions were vastly impacted by personal circumstances (i.e., their status as daughters and soon-to-be mothers), but also from factors outside of their immediate control such as federal and state legislation, and institutional policies and practices characteristic of the socio-political time. In the narrative that follows, I highlight on some of these critical life moments, but I pay particular attention to describing how the mothers tactfully resisted and worked to dismantle practices of exclusion and structures of oppression which impacted their lives during the 1980s and 1990s.

I begin this chapter by providing some background information about the socio-political landscape of the time to set the context for a generalized discussion about the mothers' early motives for pursuing a college degree. Following this is a conversation about the motherscholars' individual journeys through college in the 1980s and 1990s. I carry this discussion forward by presenting seven portraits, one for each of the motherscholars. I initiate conversation about the motherscholars by first introducing Erika R. Pena. During the 1980s and 1990s, Erika was not enrolled in college; she instead chose to birth and rear all three of her daughters. Because this chapter covers the 1980s–1990s timespan, I introduce Erika very briefly and reserve further comments about her post-secondary journey for Chapter Seven where I speak to the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s and 2020s. After introducing Erika, I spend a considerable amount of time detailing the early educational experiences of the other six mothers. I introduce Frida Leyva and Socorro Genoveva Nino and I offer commentary on their college access stories in the U.S. I then move to introduce the fourth motherscholar in the birthstory chronology, Glorita Chipi. During the 1980s, Glorita was working towards an undergraduate degree, but she did so abroad, in her home country, Perú.

Following a discussion about Glorita's college access narrative, I introduce Gaby Abraham and Francisca Valencia and I situate their educational journeys within a larger anti-immigrant U.S. context. Finally, I end by introducing the youngest of the mothers, Sofia Titus, and I bring us to the year 1999, just before the turn of the 21st century. Throughout the chapter, I speak to some of the critical life moments which characterized the mothers' educational pathways as young, unmarried women. The conversation I initiate about the mothers' individual journeys is important because it reaffirms that the mothers' educational histories extend beyond the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the twenty-first century. That is, independent of

the joint college experience with their daughters, the mothers have their own educational life stories to tell.

The Socio-Political Backdrop of the 1980s and 1990s

Before I engage a more thorough examination of the motherscholars' early educational experiences, it is imperative that I provide background information about the 1980s and 1990s. As the women detailed in their individual pláticas as well as in their letters to their daughters, the 1980s and early 1990s were a contentious time where anti-immigration rhetoric, racism, and sexism flourished. Patterns of educational exclusion that manifested in the 1960s and 1970s for Mercedes de Uriarte and Cristina Bodinger-de Uriarte continued to impact the lives of the seven motherscholars. In their recollections, the mothers made explicit reference to the Ronald Regan administration of the 1980s and to accompanying policies that colored the George H. W. Bush era of the early 1990s.

The socio-political era that gained traction in the mid-1970s during the Reagan administrations reignited conservative and racist ideologies which vastly impacted judicial decisions and education policies. When the Reagan administration took office in 1981, racially and ethnically marginalized communities, including Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, experienced backlash from the social equity programs of the 1960s and 1970s. Ana Castillo (2014) describes the 1980s:

Community projects and grassroots programs dependent on government funding—rehabilitation and training, childcare, early education and alternative schooling, youth counseling, cultural projects that supported the arts and community artists, rehab-housing for low-income families, and women's shelters—shut down. (p. 31)

Moreover, increased military spending, reduced spending on education, and an ever-deepening recession substantially rolled back many of the socio-educational achievements which emerged from grassroots movements like the Black Power, Civil Rights, and Chicano Movements, as well

as from President Johnson's War on Poverty (Castillo, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1999). The rollbacks of these programs devastated Chicana/o and Latina/o communities, as well as education systems situated in the U.S. Southwest.

By the late 1980s, California ranked eighth nationally in per capita income, but spent only 3.8% of its income on public education, placing it forty-sixth among the fifty states (Delgado Bernal, 1999; Kozol, 2012). Though funding does not determine academic excellence and educational mobility, it is important for opportunities to come by for students. For those Chicana/o Latina/o students who did successfully enroll in college post their high school graduations, half began their journey at a community college (Astin, 1982; Durán, 1983). The other half began at a four-year colleges and universities (Astin, 1982; Durán, 1983). The seven mothers navigated life and schooling under these socio-political conditions. Now that I have set the context for the 1980s and 1990s, I transition to initiate a generalized discussion about the mothers' motives for pursuing a college degree. Following this general discussion are more detailed portraits about their individual post-secondary journeys during the 1980s and 1990s.

The Mothers and their Early College Experiences

The motherscholars in this story are at present, birth mothers to their children. But this was not always the case. Before birthing their children, they were simply daughters and well as sisters to their own siblings. In the 1980s and 1990s, the (now) mothers began their college journeys as young, unmarried women, without having birthed any children of their own. Though the women did serve as othermothers to siblings⁷⁰ their birth children arrived while they were already in college, or after they earned their first college degree. This distinction is noteworthy

⁷⁰ The mothers often referred to experiences taking on maternal and caretaking roles in their immediate families.

because it affirms that the (now) motherscholars had a genuine interest in pursuing college for reasons that extended beyond providing a “better life” for their birth children as is often cited as the primary motive for the mothers to enroll in and persist through higher education (Lapayese, 2012).

Early on in their academic careers, all of the (now) mothercholars believed that the promises of socioeconomic mobility which would presumably accompany their post-secondary degree acquisition would lead them, their immediate families (i.e., parents and siblings), and their future families (their birth children and spouses) to become more financially secure. Therefore, the possibilities of learning, for the sake of learning, but also of learning for the purposes of socioeconomic mobility inspired the women to enroll in college in the 1980s and 1990s. In a letter written to her daughters on August 15, 2019, Frida Leyva notes, “My initial motive to pursue higher education [in 1983] was the desire to help others in the medical field, as a nurse. Also, I wanted a profession that would allow me to live independently and eventually allow me to raise a family.” Though planning for a career to support their future families was not necessarily at the forefront of their life visions when they initially started college, the motherscholars were personally invested in and committed to going to college because it was important for them to nurture what Frida and others describe as their “love of learning.” Indeed, the motherscholars’ love of learning coupled with the promises of reaping the financial benefits of transitioning into the professional workforce inspired many of them to embark on their college journeys during a time where Chicana/Latina scholars were overwhelmingly absent from and pushed out of academic spaces.

As the years progressed and their own families expanded into the late 1980s and early 1990s, the mothers’ motives for continuing on a collegiate route shifted alongside changes in

their motherhood statuses. Some like Frida and Francisca became pregnant while in college and quickly made life adjustments in their transition to young motherhood and scholarhood. While others, like Socorro Genoveva and Glorita, transitioned into the workforce as young professionals after having graduated from college without birthing any children of their own until much later in their lives. Still others, like Gaby and Erika, entered the college space in the 2000s and 2010s as mature adults when their own children were already of college-going age. The seven motherscholars' differential approaches to negotiating their place in the academe brings to light the tensions which developed for the women who were at times confronted with making critical life decisions about family planning, pursuing their academic dreams, and navigating the socio-political realities of the times. In the portraits that follow, I describe the mothers' individual journey to college in the 1980s and 1990s to show that their collegiate aspirations and academic successes pre-date the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s and 2020s.

Erika's Early School Challenges and Her Transition to Motherhood (1985)

Erika R. Peña, the first motherscholar I introduce in this birthstory, is the eldest of three siblings in her family of five. Born in 1967 and raised in Guatemala, Erika describes her childhood as both a wonderous time where she had the opportunity to explore the world around her, but also a time marked by health challenges and torments from family and acquaintances who frequently called into question her ability to learn and think critically. While she was attending elementary school in Guatemala, Erika had a challenging time processing and retaining information because she suffered from a medical condition that impacted her everyday life. Though she put in great effort to progress in her studies, the challenges that came with her early diagnosis, coupled with tormenting messages from medics, educators, and family members who

repeatedly told her she, “was not smart enough to go to school” set Erika on an academically stagnant path. In her individual pláticas, she described this early experience in Guatemala:

I [tried] to push myself. [But] I guess I was one of those kids who had a lot of problems learning and my mother and her doctor, the doctor that was checking my ears . . . said that I was going to have problems learning. That was kind of like a traumatizing thing for me.

Erika denotes this interaction with the doctor as one of many traumatizing experiences which impacted how she viewed herself as a scholar and consequently, how she performed in elementary and secondary school. Negative interactions with persons in positions of authority led Erika to believe that she would have “a lot of problems learning,” and would consequently not perform well in formal education settings. Erika internalized these messages as a young girl. Though she tried to shake them off, they crept their way into her academic self-image when she left Guatemala for the United States.

When she and her family immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1980s, Erika enrolled in Burbank Junior High and eventually moved on to complete her secondary education at Burbank High School (Burbank, California). When she was seventeen years old, she birthed her eldest daughter, Cindy Luquin. Erika recalled the birthing experience during the individual plática:

When I was 17, I had [Cindy]. I always felt like she was my little sister when I first saw her born. I feel so connected to her and I used to say, “She feels like a little sister to me,” . . . I grew up thinking “This girl's going to be more than I am someday. I want her to have the best. I want her to be happy,” I tried the best that I could. She's going to go far.

Erika is a special case in the motherscholar cohort of seven presented in this chapter; she is the first of the mothers to birth a child (1985), and the final of the motherscholars to enroll in college (2019). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Erika spent her time birthing and rearing her three

daughters (whom she endearingly refers to as Beba Numero Uno, Beba Numero Dos, and Beba Numero Tres⁷¹).

Though Erika has thoroughly enjoyed motherhood, she still felt, deep down in her soul that something was missing in her life. She said, “I always told [my daughters] that I always feel like I was missing something that I needed to fully in my heart; and that was go to school” (Erika individual plática). It would be approximately three decades before Erika would make the decision to enroll in college to pursue her professional dream of becoming a paralegal. Erika did not know it at the time, but the 1985 birth of her eldest daughter, Cindy, would lead Erika on a wholly unanticipated journey to scholarhood. In 2019, when her daughters were of college-going age, Erika made her grand entrance into the U.S. higher education scene. Erika and Cindy’s joint journey through college in the 2010s is fascinating because of the strategies that they collectively employed to support one another during a really challenging epoch in their lifetimes. However, given that the focus of this chapter is the 1980s and 1990s, I reserve further comments about Erika’s post-secondary journey for Chapter Seven where I speak on the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years.

Frida Leyva’s Pathway to Motherhood at Mt. St. Mary’s College

If Erika was the first of the mothers to birth a child (after Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte), then Frida was the first motherscholar to begin her college journey in the United States (after Mercedes). In the late 1970s, when she was seven years old, Frida immigrated to the U.S. from Belize City, Belize. Frida recalls travelling via charter bus from Belize City to the Tijuana-San

⁷¹ Beba Número Uno translates to Baby Number One; Beba Numero Dos translates to Baby Number Two; and Beba Número Tres translates to Baby Number Three. In crafting these endearing nicknames, Erika pays homage to her daughters’ birth order. Since she is the eldest of the three daughters, Cindy is Beba Número Uno. Cindy’s two younger sisters are Bebas Número Dos y Tres.

Diego border in California alongside her younger sister. Both girls, without their parents, endured the days-long bus ride crossing several international borders with only a knapsack of food and their belongings in hand.

Frida endured different levels of marginalization as a young scholar when she began her K-12 studies in the U.S. When she first arrived to Los Angeles, Frida enrolled at a private, Christian, majority-white elementary school and formed part of a three-person cohort of Latina/o identified students. Frida attended the private Christian elementary school from the second grade to the first half of fifth grade and describes having experienced various forms of “othering” on the basis of her ethnic identity, her English-language proficiency, and language differences tied to her Belizean accent. Though Frida often felt invisible learning as one of two Chicana/Latina students in a school with majority-white peers and educators, she had the privilege of receiving honors and advanced-level academic training throughout her elementary years and into her high school experience.

Progressing through Reseda High School on a college-bound track prepared Frida for the rigors of a collegiate-level curriculum. Frida originally had plans of attending a local Los Angeles community college immediately following her graduation from Reseda High, but she was later urged to submit her application to four-year institution by her high school algebra teacher. The nudging was encouragement enough for Frida to seek out further information regarding the college admissions process at a college fair held during her senior year. At the college fair, Frida approached a booth set up by admissions representatives from Mount Saint Mary’s (Mt. St. Mary’s) University, a small, Catholic, private liberal arts university located in the wealthy Westside of Los Angeles. After speaking with the campus representative, Frida

learned that she qualified for an application fee waiver and made the decision to apply to the four year institution. Given her stellar academic record, Frida was admitted to the all-girls university.

When she began her undergraduate career in the fall of 1983 at Mt. St. Mary's, Frida did not have any birth children of her own. However, in her third year of undergraduate study, she became pregnant with her first child—her eldest and only son. Frida recalls being one of two pregnant women on the Mt. St. Mary's campus, but her circumstances were especially damning: she was a single, pregnant, Chicana/Latina, in a majority-white, all girls Catholic school. Frida's decision to have a child out of wedlock exacerbated the tensions she felt as a pregnant Belizean Scholar of Color and aspiring nurse. Though Frida's growing baby belly did not show much throughout her pregnancy, she often bore witness to the silent, yet invasive gossip circulating about her. It is important to note that Frida did not publicly disclose her pregnancy status to her peers or instructors at any point during her time at Mt. St. Mary's. However, unwarranted private and public discourses circulating between peers and instructors about Frida's pregnancy status essentially "outed" her, without her consent. Frida was never directly "attacked" or spoken to aggressively, but she often felt the gazes and heard quiet whispers as her pregnant, brown body, became objectified in and out of the classroom. She recalled:

I didn't show a whole lot. I remember I was very pregnant in my [Obstetrics] class, and the teacher wanted to show some maneuvers, like how to reposition the baby. Not until after the class, [did a white colleague say], "Oh, you should have used Frida. She's pregnant!" [And my white instructor replied], "Oh, I didn't know she was pregnant. I would have asked her to [lend her body for the demonstration if I would have known]."

As is evident in the quote above, Frida's pregnant, brown body quickly became a site of public critique, objectification, and public consumption. By entertaining the possibility of "using" her body for a public classroom demonstration, Frida's colleagues and instructors inserted themselves into a very sensitive part of Frida's personal life. Her peers and instructors essentially entertained the idea of using her and her unborn child as models for a "demonstration," without

her consent. Though Frida was a colleague who made profound contributions in all her classes, her private choice to become pregnant and to navigate the university as a pregnant Belizean woman, became commodified in and out of the classroom. Her ability to make meaningful scholarly contributions as a pregnant student were also called into question.

For Women and Mothers of Color, underlying assumptions about private issues such as having a family are often fueled by sexist, racist, and classist ideologies (Caballero et al., 2017). Negative stereotypes which so often position low-income Chicanas/Latinas as hypersexual and hyper-fertile have profoundly impacted the educational experiences of motherscholars such that their academic capabilities are called into question and their bodies become commodified, as they were in Frida's case. Cisneros and colleagues (2019) affirmed this to be true when they state:

we shared dichotomous experiences of (in)visibility as pregnant-presenting individuals on campus. Our bodies were sites of discrimination and negative stereotypes; we felt the assumptions made by our peers and professors about our perceived lack of commitment to the academy... (p. 290)

Though so many odds were stacked against her during her pregnancy, Frida continued nursing her young son to term while rounding off her third year of undergraduate coursework. In July of 1986, between her third and fourth years at Mount St. Mary's, Frida's son was born. Three weeks post his birth, Frida took and successfully passed the National Council License Exam (NCLEX) thereby denoting her qualifications to work as a registered nurse in the state of California. The following spring, in 1987, Frida graduated with a bachelor's degree in Nursing in one hand, and her young son held tightly in the other.

Socorro Genoveva and the 1986 College Access "Loophole"

In 1986, one year after Erika's daughter, Cindy was born and the same year that Frida's son was born, Socorro Genoveva Nino transitioned into her new identity as a young college

student in the beachside college town of Isla Vista, California. Much like Frida, Socorro Genoveva immigrated to the U.S. as a young girl. In 1974, when she was four years old, Socorro Genoveva and two of her siblings crossed the U.S.-Mexico border, by way of the San Diego-Tijuana entry port eager to begin a new life alongside their parents who were already living in the United States. Soon after her arrival to and settlement in Los Angeles, Socorro Genoveva was enrolled in local elementary and middle schools in the greater LA area and so began her academic journey in the U.S.

Socorro Genoveva describes her mother and father as strong proponents of higher education (Valencia & Black, 2002). While Socorro Genoveva's father verbally encouraged her and her siblings to do well in school and to one day become *profesionales*,⁷² her mother really modeled what it looked like for an undocumented, immigrant, Chicana/Latina mother to pursue formal education in the U.S. Throughout her elementary and middle school years, both Socorro Genoveva and her mother found themselves navigating formal schooling channels at times that overlapped. At one point, they even attended the same school, Thomas Edison Middle School, though they were pursuing different credentials (Socorro Genoveva a primary education, and her mother, English language proficiency). Socorro Genoveva recalls her mother's longstanding commitment to learn English in the 1970s in the following reflection:

[My mom] was going to school the whole time [my siblings and I] were in school... she took English classes at the Middle School... She did not miss one single parent-teacher conference [of ours]. Even though she didn't speak English, she always showed up, and she would have us translate.

⁷² *Profesionales* translates to professionals. In this context, Socorro Genoveva's father aspired for his children to acquire a formal education before transitioning into professional careers.

If we pause for a second and really consider what Socorro Genoveva describes above, we clearly see yet another example of a shared motherscholar-daughterscholar experience. Much like the de Uriarte family who shared a triple mother-daughter-son graduation in the 1970s, a young Socorro Genoveva and her mother traversed the terrains of scholarhood, daughterhood, and motherhood decades before Socorro Genoveva became a motherscholar herself. By joining her daughter (and her other children) in school, Socorro Genoveva's mother capitalized on her linguist and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to ensure her children felt supported as they moved along their own academic pathways. By doing so, Socorro Genoveva's mother modeled what it looked like for an immigrant, working-class, Chicana/Latina motherscholar to navigate U.S. schooling systems in the 1980s.

This familial support structure coupled with her “love of learning” set Socorro Genoveva on a college-bound pathway early in her educational career. Much like Frida, Socorro Genoveva was tracked into honors-level and pre-collegiate courses throughout elementary and secondary school. While in high school Socorro Genoveva was enrolled in a Magnet Program where she took specialized college-preparatory courses (i.e., Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes). She also participated in diversity outreach initiatives like the federally funded Upward Bound program⁷³. Upward Bound was central to Socorro Genoveva's educational high school journey because she gained access to supplemental academic instruction and college mentorship. Unfortunately, though, Socorro Genoveva was confronted with a harsh reality which impacted her educational journeys for years to come—she was undocumented. Though there existed no

⁷³ Upward Bound, created in 1965, is one of eight federally funded TRIO programs designed to support high school students from low-income families and from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree to complete secondary education, and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

federal or state law that prohibited the admission of undocumented immigrants in the 1980s, institutional policies on admitting undocumented students often kept undocumented peoples out of colleges and universities (Diaz-Strong et al., 2011). For example, many public and private higher education institution required applicants to submit proof of citizenship or legal residency; and they refused to admit students who failed to provide legal documentation. In 1982 the Supreme Court case, *Plyler v. Doe*, held that states may not discriminate against students enrolling in K-12 U.S. public schools on the basis of their legal status. However, this decision did not address public education beyond high school and left access to higher education ambiguous (Diaz-Strong et al., 2011). Though federal or state laws did not require students to prove citizenship to enter U.S. institutions of higher education, the immigration status of undocumented students made them ineligible for any type of federal aid.

In 1986, an undocumented Socorro Genoveva was getting ready to graduate from high school and was preparing for her transition to a four-year university. Socorro Genoveva recalls feeling “lucky” because by 1986, she and her mentors had “figured out a loophole” so that she could enroll in and continue her studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) without providing proof of California residency. She commented on the “loophole”:

[In 1976] it wasn't like it is now. Now, you have to have a legal Social Security number and you have to have a Green Card... When I started going to college, you needed a Social. I had a fake one. But you didn't need to have a Green Card. You could say you were out-of-state. And we had people who helped me do that.

With support from counselors and mentors, Socorro Genoveva strategically establishing her residency by denoting herself as an “out of state” student. Though she was required to pay out-of-state tuition rates, this “loophole” allowed Socorro Genoveva to establish her enrollment eligibility at UCSB.

When Socorro Genoveva began her journey as an undocumented student at UCSB in September 1986, “there were not a lot of Latinas or Black people in college. We were very, very few.” She recalls the struggles of feeling both hyper-visible and ostracized on UCSB campus because she frequented the Financial Aid Office and formed part of an ethnic community who was in the numeric minority. Understandably, Socorro Genoveva struggled to fund her undergraduate degree. Not only was she pigeonholed into paying high out-of-state tuition costs, but she also came from a poor, working-class background and was thus forced to work several jobs to pay for the high costs of living in Isla Vista. However, the life experiences of undocumented peoples like Socorro Genoveva would be drastically impacted in November 1986 with the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA).

Passed by the 99th U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on November 6, 1986, the IRCA reformed U.S. immigration law to admit refugees for humanitarian reasons and resulted in the resettlement of refugees in the U.S. Though the IRCA was intended to toughen U.S. immigration law by increasing border security and requiring employers to monitor the immigration status of their employees, it also granted amnesty to nearly three million immigrants (mostly Mexicans) who had quietly slipped across the border during the 1970s and 1980s (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). Essentially, the IRCA established a pathway to citizenship that made Socorro Genoveva, and other undocumented Chicana/o and Latina/o students like her eligible for Federal Financial Aid and other opportunities. Across the nation and especially in California, women like Socorro Genoveva, Gaby, Francisca and Glorita would benefit immensely from protections granted by the IRCA. As we will soon learn, 1987, the year the IRCA was implemented, became a monumental year for the motherscholars.

Celebrating the Milestones of 1987

Four critical events took place in 1987 making it an especially important year to feature in this educational birth story. These events were not localized in California, rather they unfolded across the country and internationally. While the Spring of 1987 marked the end of Frida's time as an undergraduate motherscholar at Mt. Saint Mary's college in Los Angeles, it also marked the beginning of Socorro Genoveva's 14-year journey to U.S. citizenship. As was previously noted, Socorro Genoveva had newly acquired access to a Green Card to establish her California residency; this status change allowed her to qualify for in-state tuition at UC Santa Barbara beginning in 1987.

Gaby's GED Experience in New York

Several hundred thousand miles northeast of Isla Vista, California, a young Gaby also celebrated the end of an academic epoch when she successfully earned her General Education Degree (GED) from Clover Drive Adult Center in Great Neck, New York. Gaby was born and raised in Puebla, Mexico and made the courageous decision to immigrate to the U.S. alone when she was just twenty years old. As a new, undocumented migrant to the U.S., Gaby relied heavily on one of her aunts for Spanish-to-English translation support and for help with navigating various U.S. institutions (e.g., the workforce and education system). However, soon after Gaby's arrival to New York, her aunt moved to Massachusetts and Gaby found herself living alone and struggling to communicate with others. Though she was for the most part, alone in New York, Gaby was eager to learn English and to acquire her GED at Clover Drive. Gaby took a full load of classes to meet her degree objective while working several odd jobs including taking on responsibilities as a housekeeper and babysitter. Though she was a caregiver to other young children, Gaby did not have any birth children of her own in the late 1980s.

In 1987, as her graduation from the adult education program neared, Gaby became more and more interested in furthering her studies at the post-secondary level. However, she quickly reconsidered those plans when she learned from her social networks that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents frequented the local community college she had hoped to enroll in. While conversing with her colleagues, Gaby learned that ICE collected data provided by the community college to identify undocumented students on campus. These students later became targets and victims of deportation. Gaby speaks on some of the fears below,

Entonces, yo pensé que a lo mejor, podría ir al college. Pero en ese entonces, inmigración, si tú estabas inscrita en los colegios, te podían deportar . . . Yo oía de casos que muchas personas fueron deportadas porque estaban en el colegio comunitario... de allí ... era una forma de que ellos te contactaban... o sea, de por si eras indocumentada, ¿verdad? Porque no tenías tu residencia, tu Green Card, tu permiso de trabajo.

So I thought maybe I could go to college. But back then, if you were enrolled in college [Immigration and Customs Enforcement; ICE] could deport you . . . I heard of cases where many people were deported because they were enrolled in that specific community college . . . it was a way for them [ICE] to identify and contact you if you were undocumented because you did not have your residency, your Green Card, your work permit.

Gaby was very interested in furthering her academic goals in the late 1980s, but her compromising undocumented status, real fears and threats of deportation, and confounding personal circumstances ultimately led her to forgo enrolling at the local community college. Gaby was interested in beginning the pathway to citizenship, but she did not have the monetary capital or social networks necessary for beginning the long and tedious process. Rather than live in fear though, she left New York and migrated westward to California eager to begin life anew. This move signaled a new rebirthing opportunity in Gaby's life. In California, she married, started a family, and launched a scented-candle-making company that was tailored specifically for the Chicana/o Latina/o community in Southern California (Kendall, 2017).

Gaby did not have the opportunity to go to college as a young, single woman in her twenties, but her academic feat at Clover Drive Adult Center set her on a path to develop the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary for her entrance into the California community college system. Approximately twenty years post her 1987 graduation, Gaby returned to school at Los Angeles Valley College to study business administration in the hopes of relaunching her scented candle business. Still, her 1987 Clover Drive Adult Center academic triumph stood as a testament to her courage, resilience, and commitment to learning in the face of financial, legal, and educational struggle.

Glorita's Journey to the Peruvian Naval Academy

In Lima, Perú, Glorita Chipi also found herself anxiously undergoing a new life transition from high school student to undergraduate scholar in 1987. The early years of Glorita's post-secondary journey is unique when compared to that of the other motherscholars in this birthstory because it took place abroad. Glorita was born in Lima, Perú, in 1970, as the seventh child in a family of ten siblings. Much like Socorro Genoveva's father, Glorita's father, a Peruvian Navy veteran, held very high academic and career expectations for all eleven of his children. He really hoped all his daughters would become college educated and he was confident his sons would follow in his footsteps by enlisting into the Peruvian Navy. To demonstrate their commitment to and support of their children's academic advancement, Glorita's parents invested every penny they owned into financing their children's schooling at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

However, in the months leading up to her high school graduation, Glorita's father painstakingly told her that the family had no funds available to help finance her college tuition. The funds that were once available to Glorita's siblings had been used up and were quickly

diminishing. Though she could no longer rely on her parents for financial support, Glorita remained determined to fulfill her life-long educational goals, so she decided to fund her college degree herself. Strategizing alongside her father, Glorita came up with the following:

My dad gave me the option to join the navy and go into the Navy Nursing School . . . So I went and applied. . . [That is how I eventually went] to the Navy academy . . . I did a total of nine years in the Navy . . . The education was free, plus I got paid [for] going to school.

Glorita prides herself for having taken initiative to secure the funding necessary to pay for her college tuition and to maintain her financial independence at a young age. As one can imagine, enduring the physical, emotional, and psychological hurdles of completing military training while pursuing an undergraduate journey in South America was challenging to do. Even though her body and mind were exhausted, Glorita was fully committed to her studies.

Unfortunately, though, as she was preparing for her 1992 undergraduate graduation from the Naval Academy, Glorita received devastating news that her mother had passed away from cancer. In her plática which took place in 2019, several decades post her mother's passing, Glorita expressed that she felt deeply overwhelmed about the news of her mother's passing because it came at critical point in her undergraduate trajectory. In hearing Glorita describe this experience, I sensed hints of guilt and sadness:

When I was getting ready to graduate, my mom passed away. I was like, "This is the time [for this to happen?]" I was like, "I'm in the nursing program, my mom got sick and got diagnosed with cancer and she passed away right before my graduation." So I was feeling so sad and [I thought to myself], "I didn't do [enough] for my mom because I was [always] in the middle of the tests, I was in the middle of graduation."

It is evident that Glorita felt really torn about having had to "chose" between dedicating her life to her schoolwork and being present for her terminally ill mother. Though the quote above alludes to the fact that Glorita wished she could have been more of a present daughter to her mother in her final days of life, she also recognized that her academic and contractual obligations

to the Peruvian Navy put her in a precarious situation. She was forced to create and sustain clear boundaries between her school, work, and home life, though this was not necessarily her personal preference.

Glorita is not alone in feeling torn and guilty about having been forced to privilege one aspect of the self, over the other (i.e., privileging the professional/academic self over the holistic self). In fact, all the motherscholars described feeling guilty for having dedicated a lot of time to their studies, as opposed to investing their energy in nurturing and being physically present for their families. In the next two chapters, we learn more about how the motherscholars (and daughterscholars) negotiated these feelings of guilt and conflict.

Still, Glorita's experiences of grief during academic triumph reifies the challenges that working-class Chicana/Latina women endured on their pathways to high learning. Often, they were forced to make personally compromising and challenging decisions in order to fund their schooling and pursue their academic dreams. Some like Socorro Genoveva found procedural "loopholes," some like Gaby avoided enrolling in college until it was legally safe for them to do so, and others, like Glorita, enlisted in the armed forces to satiate their love of learning. Taken together, the four critical events of 1987 remind us that regardless of where they found themselves on the map—be it in Los Angeles, in Santa Barbara, in New York, or in Perú—the Chicana/Latina motherscholar educational life experiences were vastly impacted by federal policies, institutional procedures, and other circumstances outside of their control. Now that I have brought to light these four critical events of 1987, I move us along the birthstory chronology to the early 1990s and I introduce Francisca.

Francisca's Bridge to a Four-year Institution, Early 1990s

Francisca Valencia's trajectory of educational hardship and undocumented uncertainties mirrors those which Socorro Geneoveva and Gaby pointed to in early sections of this chapter. Much like her motherscholar counterparts, Francisca made the long trip from Michoacán, Mexico, anxious to cross the Tijuana-San Diego entry port in pursuit of new life opportunities in the United States. In the 1980s, Francisca crossed the U.S. Mexico-border alongside her mother, teenage sister, and newborn brother. The women and young infant found themselves fleeing an impoverished lifestyle and near-fatal domestic violence situation in Mexico, and painstakingly leaving the other half of their family (four young siblings) under the care of Francisca's grandmother back in their hometown. Though it pained the family to become separated, Francisca made the long journey to the U.S. in pursuit of new life opportunities. Unfortunately, the three women and newborn child became undocumented upon their arrival to the U.S., but this new identify was better than the possibly fatal alternative.

Shortly upon their arrival to the San Gabriel Valley, a metropolis east of Los Angeles, Francisca, her younger sister, and her mother began working double and triple shifts with a goal of gathering sufficient funds to relocate the remaining family members to the U.S. In the U.S., as in Mexico, the women had no transportation to get them to and from work, so they relied heavily on public transit to navigate across and within the greater Los Angeles area. Understandably, Francisca found it especially challenging to work as an undocumented person in the U.S. without the means to communicate in English with employers. Therefore, propelled by financial "necessity," an impending need to learn English very quickly, and guided by her life-long yearning to become formally educated, Francisca made the decision to enroll at a local adult

school to study English as a second language. Once enrolled in the adult school, Francisca decided to also pursue a GED.

By day, Francisca labored arduously to financially support her family; and by night, she attended classes and studied for hours on end. In a matter of two short years, Francisca breezed through both learning programs and soon prepared for her graduation. Before transitioning out of the adult school, Francisca was honored, by recommendation of the faculty, as the inaugural recipient of a prestigious scholarship designed to help fund her college tuition. Francisca recalls feeling excited about the nomination because above all, the recognition came with a \$250 prize.

Since Francisca is the first in her family to pursue college in the U.S. and in Mexico, she felt understandably very confused about the expectations tethered to the scholarship award. After speaking briefly with an administrative assistant at the adult school and gaining a little more clarity around the expectations for “cashing in” on the award, Francisca learned she would be eligible to claim the \$250 only after she enrolled in college and submitted “evidence” of her registration. Puzzled, Francisca asked the administrative assistant in Spanish, “*Que es colegio?*” (“What is college?”). The assistant nonchalantly replied, “*Un lugar en donde estudie la gente*” (“A place where people study”). As a first-generation college student and immigrant, Francisca knew very little about how to access this “place where people study.” By the time she graduated from the adult school, Francisca had learned to navigate the city bus system very efficiently but still, she did not know where “college” was on a city map. So, she did the first thing that came to mind for her, and that was to set out in search of this place called “college.” Francisca described that experience during the individual plática:

Ok, so then I [thought] “I need my money.” \$250, that was an awful lot of money for us. And I had promised everybody stuff, you know? Shoes and food, because we were struggling. So, anyway, [I got on the city bus and told the bus driver, “Please take me to college”!]. And I ended up getting dropped off [at Rio Hondo College]. From there, [I

asked around] “Donde esta la entrada? [They directed me up the hill] and I walked up. I don’t know if you’ve been to Rio, do you remember there’s a hill? So, I just walk up all the way to the top, until they told me that was the Admissions [Office]. [I walked up to the representative] and I said, “I just need to get enrolled in school.”

Francisca’s brave decision, marked by uncertainty and strong determinism, set her up on a decades-long path to walk the halls of the Ivory Tower. Upon her enrollment at Rio Hondo College, in Whittier California, Francisca was recruited into the PUENTE Program.⁷⁴ Francisca’s participation in PUENTE was integral to her academic journey because it set her on a pathway to successfully transfer out of Rio Hondo College and to later transfer into the University of California in a timely manner. Of course, Francisca’s experiences at Rio Hondo and in the PUENTE program were not without their own challenges. During her time as a student at Rio Hondo College, Francisca became pregnant.

Much like Frida, a pregnant Francisca traversed her college campus attending classes, making visits to the tutoring and writing centers, and trying to nourish her growing body. In the early 1990s, Francisca’s due date aligned with her finals examination schedule and this conflict made it especially challenging for her to balance the responsibilities of impending motherhood and her academic responsibilities. In the quote below, Francisca recounted a conversation she had with her obstetrician in the hours leading up to her eldest daughter, Priscilla’s, birth:

[In the early 1990s,] my husband and I were both were going to [Rio Hondo College]... Priscilla was almost about to be born in the classroom. I was expecting, I was already in labor, and I just needed to finish my finals. I went to class anyway. [The] doctor said, “You’re two centimeters dilated!” I [responded], “Ahorita regreso, I’ll be right back, I’m just going to go take my finals.” They go, “No, no, no, no puede irse!” [I said again,] “I’ll be right back. I’m just going to go take my finals and I’ll come back!” “But you’re two centimeters dilated,” [they stammered]. “I know. I’ll be right back!” [I replied]. And I went and took the finals.

⁷⁴ The PUENTE Program, founded in 1981 by Felix Galaviz and Patricia McGrath at Chabot College in Hayward, California, was launched as a grassroots initiative to address the low rate of academic achievement among Mexican American and Latino students. The PUENTE program is an academic and community leadership program designed to help students transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

In this quote, we hear that though Francisca’s body was physically preparing to give birth, her mind and spirit were determined to meet a critical academic objective—rounding off the academic term strong by completing her final examinations. Though her body was physically in labor, Francisca successfully completed two of the three final exams that Spring semester. Later that day, Francisca gave birth to Priscilla. Indeed, her self-described “stubborn,” yet “determined” approach to life, led Francisca to successfully surpass the personal, financial, educational, and legal challenges that colored her educational life journey in the 1980s and 1990s. She carried this same energy into her return to the college in the 2010s.

Sofia’s Journey to the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising

Sofia is the final mother I introduce in this chapter of the birthstory and she is the youngest of the seven. Sofia was born in 1977 and lived for most of her life in the California Central Valley (Stockton and Modesto in particular). She is the youngest of five siblings and has only ever navigated school systems in the U.S. given that generations of her family have lived in the Central Valley. During our plática, Sofia recalled early experiences of having been tracked into advanced courses. She often received high marks on her report cards, and she was very involved in school activities throughout primary and secondary school.

When she began high school in Stockton, Sofia had the opportunity to enroll in the prestigious International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The IB program is an internationally recognized and externally validated comprehensive program of study that provides students with access to highly trained teachers and to an advanced and comprehensive curriculum

Which encourages students to, “be problem-solving, critically-thinking, life-long learners able to pursue any educational and career path” (ibo.org, 2021). Historically, IB programs have been established in upper-middle class and predominantly white communities in the U.S. (IBO,

2006; Matthews, 2003; Mayer, 2008). But in the early 1990s when Sofia began high school, lower-income, and schools with students from predominantly racially and ethnically underrepresented communities in California, Texas, Philadelphia, and New York implemented the IB program as a type of organizational-level reform effort designed to “stimulate high achievement” in these geographies of opportunity (Mayer, 2008). Stockton, California became one such geography of opportunity, and Franklin High School was one particular site where the IB initiative unfolded.

Sofia enjoyed participating in the IB program of study, but her involvement with IB complicated her academic schedule so much so that she could not take elective courses she was interested in. Early on in her high school career, Sofia was determined to bolster her extracurricular background, so she made the decision to enroll in such extracurriculars as marching band, yearbook club, cross country, and leadership. Throughout her time in high school, Sofia excelled in these activities while keeping up with the rigors of the IB program of study. When the beginning of her senior year neared, Sofia started to think more carefully about life after high school, especially about the college application process. Though she was a competitive applicant, Sofia had very little guidance when it came to preparing the college application. She reflected:

When I graduated that senior year, I was the student body president. I was the yearbook editor. I think I was carrying a 3.0. [grade point average]. So, I was a good student. But I just wasn't in the mindset of applying to college. And when it came time to [applying], I didn't know how to do that essay. I didn't know how to fill out the form. And I was really scared. Intimidated. More so intimidated.

Sofia is the first in her immediate family and the first child in her sibling generation to pursue a college degree in the United States, so navigating the college application process alone and with limited help became an especially daunting task for her. For high school students in the 1990s, as in the present day, applying for consideration to a four-year institution in the United States was a

multi-pronged endeavor. For their applications to be considered, high school students were often required to submit, among other materials, personal statements, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT) scores, a completed application, and a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). As she notes above, Sofia was especially nervous about completing the writing portion of the application so much so that she decided to avoid applying to any college or university that required submission of any written work as part of the application. Her inaccessibility to mentors and counselors in the IB program who could have supported throughout the application process really left her feeling defeated and nervous about applying to a four-year university all together.

Still, Sofia was interested in pursuing college beyond high school. During her senior year, Sofia received a mailed post card invitation to an Open House event which was taking place at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM), in San Francisco, California. At the time, Sofia was interested in architecture, so she took a trip out to the FIDM campus with her mother. At the Open House event, Sofia learned that she simply had to “fill out a form [to be considered]. [They] don't require an essay. You just fill out this form, and we'll see if you are accepted." Of course, given her competitive academic and extracurricular record, Sofia was admitted to the FIDM and she began her course of study immediately following her high school graduation in the fall of 1995.

Two years into her Associates degree program at FIDM, Sofia birthed the eldest of children, Renee, on Christmas Day of 1997. A couple of months later, in 1998, Sofia graduated with her Associates degree in Science from the FIDM. One year post that 1998 graduation ceremony and just before the turn of the century, Sofia decided to continue her post-secondary journey at San Joaquin Delta College, back in her hometown of Stockton, California. It would

take Sofia more than a decade of attending Delta College on and off before she had the opportunity to transfer to a four-year institution. Her journey at the university in the 21st century, however, is a discussion for Chapter Seven.

Conclusion

As is evidenced throughout this chapter, the motherscholars endured very distinct experiences in their early pathways through life and college in the 1980s and 1990s. Though the motherscholars share a similar experience of attending college alongside their daughters in the 2010s and 2020s, their individual journeys are unique when compared to that of their daughters because of the socio-political time. Before they transitioned to motherhood and started their journeys as scholars, the mothers embarked on their own life journeys immigrating to the United States, becoming acquainted with learning a new language, and navigated a new set of cultural, political, and educational practices in the United States. During the 1980s and 1990s Erika was not enrolled in college; she instead chose to birth and rear all three of her daughters. Frida, Socorro Genoveva, Francisca, and Sofia, on the other hand, navigating post-secondary schools in the United States against an anti-immigrant backdrop. Two of these four women sought a four-year degree in the U.S. immediately after their high school graduation (Frida and Socorro Genoveva), while the other two began their journeys at the community college (Francisca and Sofia). Glorita, was also working towards an undergraduate degree during the 1980s, but this experience took place abroad, in Perú. Gaby was not necessarily enrolled in college during the 1980s and 1990s; she instead worked to complete her GED requirements while navigating the anti-immigrant policies prolific during the 1980s and 1990s.

Indeed, the mothers' differential approaches to entering and navigating higher education spaces nuances our limited understanding about how Chicana/Latina women endured schooling

in the 1980s and 1990s. Individually and collectively, the motherscholars' stories reveal their unmatched determination and resilience in the face of educational inequity. Their educational life experiences were marked with challenges, yet they resisted against institutional practices and legal structures inherently designed to keep them out of college. At this point, I conclude a discussion about the motherscholars' journey through college in the 1980s and 1990s. In the next chapter, I move us along the timeline to the turn of the 21st century where we engage a conversation about the Child Rearing Years of the 2000s through 2010s.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CHILD REARING YEARS AND THE ABRAHAM FAMILY CASE
STUDY, 2000s–2010s

I always say my mom’s story is my story. And I feel like her and I were always a team.
Always, always, always.

(Danielle Abraham, Daughterscholar to Gaby Abraham)

In the previous chapter, I introduced the motherscholars to detail how they tactfully resisted policies and practices of exclusion which impacted their post-secondary trajectories during the 1980s and 1990s. In this third chapter of the Birthstory, I weave in an intergenerational discussion about daughteral educational excellence by introducing ten of the thirteen daughters, speaking on their early academic trajectories, and beginning a discussion about the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar college years (2010s–2020s). In the sections that follow, I briefly touch on the 10-year time span between the 2000s and 2010s to provide context about critical policies and life events which impacted the way the daughters (and the mothers) moved through U.S. education spaces. Following this, I begin a discussion about the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s to 2020s. The final decade of the birthstory (2010–2020) is especially integral to the motherscholar-daughterscholar narrative because it constitutes the epoch where the majority of the daughters shared overlapping post-secondary experiences with their mothers. In this chapter I begin to make sense of the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years by speaking on two themes which characterized this joint era. These themes are: (a) the joys and perils of mothering and daughtering in the twenty-first century, and (b) the personal and academic dilemmas that unfolded as Chicanas/Latinas straddled the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, and scholarhood.

To help me engage a discussion about the first theme, I turn to Gaby and Danielle Abraham, and I position their educational life story as the second case-study, after the de Uriarte

case-study of the 1970s. Gaby and Danielle's joint educational life narrative is critical to the motherscholar-daughterscholar narrative because the women are the first of the mother-daughter groups (after the de Uriarte women) to begin their joint college journey in the twenty-first century. Throughout this chapter, I highlight notable moments which characterized Danielle's and Gaby's joint time as transfer scholars and nontraditional students to unveil the joys and perils of Chicana/Latina mothering and daughtering. Throughout this chapter, as in the following, I invite readers to consider how the Mothers and Daughters of Color collaborated with one another as they developed strategies of collective resistance to combat policies and practices which contributed to their marginalization and exclusion in the academy. In the opening epigraph, Danielle reifies the collaborative and intergenerational nature of Chicana/Latina educating and she reminds us that this story is just as much about Chicana/Latina daughtering, as it is about Chicana/Latina mothering.

Setting the Stage: The Child Rearing Years, 2000–2010

I situate this third chapter of the birthstory in the years 2000 to 2010, the era wherein all the daughters were birthed and/or reared. At the turn of the century, the nation saw a profound demographic shift. The Pew Research Center (Noe Bustamante et al., 2019) notes that the Hispanic population rose by nearly 60 percent, from 22.4 million in 1990, to 35.3 million in 2000. Though Chicana/o and Latina/o students came to make up a great portion of the K-12 population very quickly, they began and ended K-12 schooling significantly behind their racial and ethnic counterparts without adequate resources to foster their movement through the educational pipeline. For example, Chicana/o and Latina/o students were disproportionately placed in remedial programs that tracked them into lower-level curricula and slowed their academic progress; they lived in high poverty regions and attended segregated schools which

were vastly under-resourced; and they attended schools with high teacher and academic personnel turnover (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). As such, Chicana/o and Latina/o students bore the brunt of vast educational inequities. These inequities ultimately caused high school graduation numbers to wane. Not surprising, an underwhelming number of post-secondary degrees were conferred to Latina/o and Chicana/o students at the associate's (83,950), bachelor's (77,745), master's (21,661), and doctoral (5,204) levels⁷⁵ in the year 2000. In California, the state ten⁷⁶ of the twelve daughterscholars called home at the time, as in the rest of the nation, Chicana/o and Latina/o students lagged far behind their racial and ethnic counterparts in educational attainment.

The Daughterscholars and their Early Educational Experiences

Whereas daughters Cindy Luquin, Maria Leyva, Priscilla Valencia, Nela Leyva, Danielle Abraham, Paulina Valencia, and Selena Nino attended public primary and secondary schools in the Greater Los Angeles¹ region, Renee Titus, Karla Chipi, and Alanis Titus were living in the California Central Valley in the year 2000. Cindy (15), the eldest of the daughterscholars was a high school student, while Maria (11), Priscilla (9), Nela (8), Danielle (7), Paulina and Selena (both 5) were in elementary school. Renee (3), Karla (2), and Alanis (newborn) were young infants and toddlers. With support from their mothers, sisters, grandmothers, and other caretakers, the baby girls learned how navigate the world around them.

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Degrees and Other Formal Awards Conferred" surveys, 1976-77 and 1980-81; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Completions Survey" (IPEDS-C:90-99); and IPEDS Fall 2000 through Fall 2018, Completions component. (This table was prepared October 2019).

⁷⁶ Cindy Luquin, Maria, Priscilla, Nela, Danielle, Cindy Escobedo (me), Paulina, Selena, Renee, Karla, Alanis, Abigail (my sister).

Given their previous experience enrolled in California college systems in the 1980s and 1990s, the mothers knew all too well that their daughters would endure vastly unequal educational opportunities while attending K-12 schools in California. The mothers were also conscious of the fact that they and their children lived in neighborhoods with schools notoriously underfunded when compared to school systems in wealthier communities. Determined to confront the educational disenfranchisement which characterized the educational plight of Chicana/o and Latina/o students at large, the mothers labored tediously to ensure their daughters had, among other experiences, access to quality preschool and childcare, teachers and counselors that communicated effectively with families, and schools that provided access to rigorous academic programs. For example, the mothers ensured their daughters were jetted on a college-bound academic track early on in their educational careers by facilitating their children's enrollment in "Gifted" and "Honors" programs. The mothers also moved heaven and earth to fund and support their daughters' participation in extracurricular activities (i.e., marching band, orchestra, sports, philanthropic student organizations, etc.). The social and academic privileges that came with their participation in these ventures helped the daughters become competitive candidates for college. Yes, the daughters attended vastly under-resourced schools, but their mothers labored endlessly to, as Glorita said, "offer [their children] the best schools," with the best conditions possible to ensure the girls had, "a great experience in junior high and [high school]."

Dr. Patricia Hill Collins (2007, 2009) would refer to this type of maternal labor as motherwork. In her chapter titled "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood" in the *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency* anthology, Collins (2007) (re)centers the racial and ethnic women's experience of motherwork to re-contextualize

how their feminized labor experiences are impacted by their racial, ethnic, and mothering status. Collins (2007) reminds us that for black women and Chicanas/Latinas (Caballero et al., 2019), mothering and motherhood is a social construction inclusive of physical, emotional, and spiritual labor that women perform alongside each other, their children, and their own racial and ethnic communities to foster wellbeing. I argue, the mothers' loving support for their children's educational advancement and their explicit attempts to combat the miseducation of Chicana/Latina girls stands as a direct challenge to exclusionary educational practices and policies of the 1990s and early 2000s. Indeed, the mothers' unwavering attempts to ensure their children had access to the most competitive schools with the best learning opportunities available signals their commitment to foster their daughters' educational advancement. Though their motherwork was at times taxing on their body, minds, and spirits, the mothers proved that their children's and their own educational successes were centerfold in their lives.

The Daughters and their Transition to College

With support from their mothers, the daughters successfully passed through primary and secondary school and matriculated into the post-secondary sector during the Obama era of the late 2000s and early 2010s. By spring of 2009, the eldest of the twelve daughterscholars were well on their way to make their transition into college. Cindy (24) and Maria (20) were the first of the daughterscholars to pursue higher education. Cindy started her college journey in 2003 at College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California, while Maria's undergraduate journey at California State University Northridge (CSUN) (Northridge, California) began in 2004 immediately following her high school graduation. Unlike Cindy and Maria whose journey began after graduating from high school, Priscilla's college journey began in 2008 vis-à-vis her

participation in the Middle College High School (MCHS) program in Riverside County⁷⁷. By the time she turned in 18 years old in 2009, Priscilla had five academic degrees under her belt, she had satisfied all graduation requirements to earn her High School Diploma, and she was ready to transfer to the University of California at Riverside equipped with four associates degrees. Maria's younger sister, Nela (17) was on the cusp of graduating from the same high school in 2009 and Danielle (16) was concurrently enrolled in high school and community college courses in the San Fernando Valley. Paulina and Selena (both 14) were on college bound tracks preparing for their transition from middle school to high school. And the three youngest daughters—Karla, Renee, and Alanis—were still in elementary school.

In 2009, most of the mothers (with the exception of Gaby Abraham) were not formally enrolled in any post-secondary institutions, but the looming economic crisis and the unpredictable labor and housing market made it such that the mothers began entertaining ideas about their possible return to the college scene. As we will soon learn, the legislative and political affordances of the Obama years, and pressures from a waning housing and labor market created the conditions for both the daughters and the mothers to be able to continue their post-secondary pathways.

Increasing Access to College: The Obama Era

When President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, he and his administration were forced to contend with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. For one, they had to weigh complex priorities about tackling and updating the George W. Bush-era federal education law, No Child Left Behind, since it had earned the ire of teachers, parents, and

⁷⁷ The MCHS program Priscilla participated in was established in 1999 and provided high school students the opportunity to take both high school and college classes during their last two years in high school.

politicians alike. Soaring college costs and student debt led the Obama Administration to institute educational reforms which impacted systems at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. For example, the President signed legislation increasing the maximum Pell Grant by more than \$1,000 and total Pell Grant funding by 70 percent, thereby helping millions of low- and moderate-income students afford college every year (National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.). His administration also took steps to reduce student loan burdens, including ending student loan subsidies for private banks and shifting the savings back to students, reducing student loan interest rates to historic lows, and capping student loan payments at 10 percent of income for all students. In 2009, the Obama administration also established and made permanent the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), which provided a tax cut of up to \$10,000 over four years for nearly 10 million working and middle-class families a year paying for college (National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.). The President's budget simplified and expanded education tax benefits by providing additional support to low-income students and families.

Of major interest to this administration, however, was expanding access to the community college and providing greater resources and support to ensure that community college students graduated, especially those from low-income backgrounds. To help materialize this goal, Obama signed a bill which allotted, among other provisions, two billion dollars to community colleges to improve education and career training programs (National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.). With this monetary investment, Obama made a political statement reaffirming the critical role of community colleges in the U.S. education system. Existing scholarship affirms that community colleges have historically provided postsecondary access to ethnic/racial minorities and low-income populations; the Obama Administration's political

investment served to highlight the important work that community colleges do for making higher education more accessible to students (Herrera & Jain, 2013).

Indeed, Obama's sweeping education policy changes reflected a federal recommitment to support higher education, but students from low-income and Communities of Color still endured overwhelming challenges on their pathways to academic achievement. Families of Color with multiple members of the household enrolled in colleges across the nation (including the families in this study) were eager to tread through college with this renewed sense of support, but their experiences were not without struggle. As we will learn in the next section and in the following chapter, the Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars in this study were especially vulnerable to enduring the perils of their academic journey. Gaby and Danielle Abraham can attest to this. At this point, I now turn to the Abraham family to help me engage a discussion about some of the joys and struggles that Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college at the same time experienced in the early 2010s.

“Girl, Struggles!”: The Joys and Perils of Motherscholaring and Daughterscholaring

If Drs. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte and Cristina Bodinger-de Uriarte are amongst the first Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pairs to have shared a joint graduation ceremony in the U.S., then Gaby (motherscholar) and Danielle (daughterscholar) Abraham are, to my knowledge, are amongst the first Chicana/Latina mother-daughter duos to have graduated in the same undergraduate class on not one, but two occasions in the early 2000s. Gaby and Danielle began their undergraduate journeys at two separate community colleges in Los Angeles a year apart from one another. Gaby first enrolled in the California Community College system in 2009 and began fulfilling requisites for her transfer from Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) to the University of California (UC). A year later, in 2010, Danielle began her pathway to transfer out

of Pierce College in Los Angeles, and into a four-year institution. Over the course of half a decade, Gaby and Danielle worked strenuously to navigate the community college sector while juggling work and caretaking responsibilities for their younger son/brother who was also rounding off his high school career. While they were enrolled at their respective community colleges, Gaby's cousin (Danielle's aunt) who had previously attended UCLA recommended that the pair become involved with the UCLA Academic Advancement Program (AAP) via the UCLA Center for Community College Partnerships⁷⁸ (CCCCP) gateway program. As I describe in more detail below, AAP was a critical student support hub that Gaby and Danielle leaned in to for holistic support pertaining to the transfer application process, retention support, and employment opportunities.

UCLA AAP as a Critical Student Support Hub

Gaby and Danielle attribute a great part of their motherscholar-daughterscholar success to the mentorship, academic support, and professional experiences they received through their affiliation with the UCLA Academic Advancement Program. AAP is one of the nation's largest student diversity programs that promotes access, equity, opportunity, academic achievement and excellence through a variety of support services to 5,000+ undergraduate students from low income, first generation and historically underrepresented backgrounds (Amah & Escobedo, 2021; Jain et al., 2020). Established in 1971 through the activism of Students of Color and built on principles of social justice, AAP has a threefold mission: (a) to ensure the academic success and graduation of students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education; (b)

⁷⁸ CCCCP's programming is framed by critical race theory, which accounts for the role of race and racism in students' educational experiences. By affirming students' sense that race is still salient even as higher education adopts race-blind policies, this approach helps students draw positively and productively on their lived experiences to authentically engage with their learning (Herrera & Jain, 2013; Jain et al., 2020).

to increase the numbers of AAP students entering graduate and professional schools; and (c) to develop the academic, scientific, political, economic, and community leadership necessary to transform society (Amah & Escobedo, 2021). AAP is made up of seven units which provide comprehensive, integrated services that promote academic achievement and excellence on and off campus. These services include academic advising, peer learning, outreach initiatives for high school and community college students, summer academic (or bridge) programs for entering freshmen and transfer students, mentoring to prepare undergraduates for graduate studies and professional schools, and scholarships.

The Abraham family's early experiences at the UCLA campus took place in 2010–2014, several years prior to their official undergraduate enrollment at UCLA. The women initially participated in AAP's Center for Community College Partnerships (CCCP) program while they were community college students preparing for their transfer to the university. CCCP⁷⁹ was founded in 2001 with the intent of enhancing and developing pathways for students attending California community colleges to selective, top tier research institutions, such as UCLA. Though Danielle was a bit reluctant to join CCCP when she first began her community college journey, she applied Danielle with her mother's encouragement. Danielle recalls that that the CCCP program was integral for helping her and her mother gain exposure to academic and social opportunities that the University of California had to offer before they even transferred out of the community college. Danielle denoted her participation in the CCCP residential program, Classic

⁷⁹ Viewing transfer pathways as the combined and collaborative responsibility of two- and four-year colleges, CCCP focuses on strengthening partnerships between UCLA and local community colleges across the Los Angeles metropolis (Jain et al., 2020). To facilitate their progressions through the educational pipeline, CCCP scholars are granted access to summer and year-long academic preparatory transfer programs which guide students through the community college experience, the application and admissions process, research and pre-graduate opportunities, and career exploration (Jain et al., 2011; Jain et al., 2020).

Site, as “the first time we even felt there was a chance for us to get into the UC system. Just being on the campus, made it real to us that this is somewhere we could be.” Gaby also noted that her participation in the Classic Site opportunity unveiled the program’s commitment to nurture a transfer receptive culture⁸⁰ (Jain et al., 2020). For the mother-daughter team, the CCCP Classic Site experience played a critical role in making them feel as though they really belonged at such a highly sought-after university. As Danielle recalls, their early engagement with CCCP, via the Classic Site program, really marked the “beginning of me and my mom’s whole journey, just like us as students, at UCLA. Getting to know the campus, getting to know the environment, what the work was like; just everything. The staff. It was our introduction to everything.”

Applying to the University of California

In November 2013, both Abraham women were rounding off their time at their respective community colleges and preparing their applications for a Fall 2014 transfer into the University of California. With support from their CCCP mentors, the Abraham women submitted their application to the University of California (including UCLA) and to other institutions. In the fall of 2013, when Gaby and Danielle submitted their application for a fall 2014 undergraduate admission, UCLA received more applications than any other institution across the University of California (Transfer Profile, 2014). In total, UCLA received 19,352 transfer applications for Fall 2014 consideration (Transfer Profile, 2014). UCLA was a top choice school for Gaby and Danielle since both had spent a considerable amount of time becoming acquainted with the

⁸⁰ Defined as an “institutional commitment by a university to support transfer students of Color. A transfer receptive culture explicitly acknowledges the roles of race and racism in the vertical transfer process from a community college to a university and it centers transfer as a form of equity in the higher education pipeline” (Jain et al., 2011; Jain et al., 2020).

university vis-à-vis their on- and off-campus involvement with AAP's CCCP opportunities. They were, of course, highly competitive candidates for the university's consideration.

During her individual plática, Gaby recounted the excitement she and Danielle felt after receiving word that Danielle had been accepted to UCLA as transfer scholars for the 2014–2015 academic school year. When Danielle received her acceptance email, she ran to her mother to share the good news and they embraced one another in acknowledgement of “una meta cumplida el hecho de que [Danielle] iba ir a [UCLA],”⁸¹ (Gaby Individual Plática). Shortly after this joyous celebration, Danielle left the family home to share the good news with a friend. Gaby stayed behind patiently waiting for her own email to arrive. For Gaby, the wait was especially excruciating because UCLA was the only UC that she had applied to. After about two hours or so, in a quick, though not entirely unexpected turn of events, Gaby learned that she too had been accepted to UCLA. Ecstatic to share word of her acceptance, Gaby immediately phoned Danielle. However, when Gaby hung up the phone, elation quickly turned to a chilling sense of dread, and imposter syndrome began to cloud the moment. Gaby shares of the insecurities that came to mind upon learning about her UCLA acceptance in this quote:

Y ya después de que colgar con mi hija, dije, ‘Dios mío, ¿qué hice?’ ¿Qué hice? Porque me entró una ansiedad... O sea, ‘UCLA, y ahora...no sé que esperar. Voy a poder, no voy a poder?’ Todos esos miedos que te empiezan a dar sobre tú de que nosotros. En el colegio comunitario, teníamos unas compañeritas ya de non-traditional students, Mamás también, y que hablan inglés como segundo idioma—que empezaban la universidad y la dejaban porque decían que era muy difícil

And after hanging up with my daughter, I said, “My God, what did I do?” What did I do? I got really anxious, and I thought to myself, “What did I do?” I thought, “UCLA...I don't know what to expect. Will I be able to do it, will I not be able to do it?” All those fears that you start to tell yourself because they were told to you. In the community college, I had some classmates—non-traditional students, mothers, too, that speak English as a second language—they started university and left it because they said it was very difficult.

⁸¹ This translates to “Danielle’s goal of earning admission to UCLA.”

As we hear in this quote, Gaby was nervous about entering into the new stage of her academic career. However, UCLA was not the only college that accepted her into the incoming class of 2014. She and Danielle had been accepted to several other selective institutions including those in the California State University system. Thus, in late June 2014, the tables were turned in favor of the mother-daughter pair whose turn it was now to either accept or decline the UCLA offer of admission. The women were excited about their dual acceptances, but they faced a dilemma: they lived far from the UCLA campus, had no means of transportation, and felt as though they were place-bound because the youngest of the Abraham children (Adam) was still attending high school in the San Fernando Valley. UCLA encourages undergraduates to live on the UCLA campus so the Abraham women were pigeonholed into making a heartbreaking decision: either forego their enrollment at UCLA and keep the family unit (Gaby, Danielle, and Gaby's son/Danielle's brother) physically united by retaining their San Fernando Valley (the Valley) based living quarters; or enroll at UCLA, physically relocate to university family housing in Westwood, and leave their son/brother behind in the Valley with their ex-husband/father to finish off his high school degree. Ultimately, Gaby and Danielle decided, for the sake of familial educational mobility, that they would continue their higher education journey at UCLA and at that point, "la familia se separó," the family was geographically separated. Guilt and sadness in its various iterations accompanied the new familial endeavor. Pursuing this pathway led Gaby to question whether she was making the "right" decision and whether she would be able to still be a "good mother" throughout the UCLA years. These feelings of uncertainty remained every present during her UCLA journey, but they also propelled Gaby, Danielle, and Adam into an educational life journey like no other.

The UCLA Transfer Summer Program

Danielle and Gaby transitioned to UCLA from their respective community colleges in August 2014 by participating in the AAP Transfer Summer Program (TSP). TSP is a rigorous seven-week academic summer program that prepares first generation, low-income, historically underrepresented students, to successfully transition to UCLA by exposing students to the demands of academic life, and to campus programs, services, learning resources, and networks⁸². Both Danielle and Gaby were interested in issues related to Chicana/o communities and culture, so they both signed up to take a Chicana/o Studies course, a Writing Intensive English course, and an Honors Collegium course with a focus on Social Science research. When the TSP class schedule announcements arrived in their email inbox in July 2014, both women were surprised to learn that “la [clase] de Chicano Studies [y la de Research Methods], nos tocó juntas⁸³.” This meant they would become classmates in two of the three courses they were enrolled in. This also meant their social and academic networks would be the same. They learned a near-identical curricula and they shared a similar midterm and finals exam schedule. They also both moved into the University Housing residences together. Indeed, in the Summer of 2014, Danielle and Gaby’s academic paths were as intertwined as they could have possibly been. Though having someone at home to study with and engage in intellectual discussion about course material was a perk, their joint experiences were not without their very real academic and material challenges.

⁸² Much like the Freshman Summer Program, students in the Transfer Summer Program receive personalized attention from professors, teaching assistants, counselors, and peer counselors.

⁸³ This translates to, “We were both enrolled in the Chicano Studies and Research Methods courses together.”

In the following quote, Danielle recalls the struggles that came with navigating a research- and writing-intensive summer curriculum with limited access to material resources very necessary to their academic success in the program:

I remember in the beginning [of the TSP intensive], we still didn't have our laptops or anything, we just had [one] desktop [computer]. And I remember I'd try to do my paper as fast as I could. And then afterward we'd sit down, and she'd write her paper and then, I'd help her edit things...because... it was a different language [for her to become accustomed to writing in]... Imagine my mom who speaks English as a second language having to get accustomed to this language, it was hard enough for me [an English Native speaker] . . . I remember we didn't have a printer either . . . we didn't have transportation. There's just so much. There's so much to the story. We didn't have transportation, but we had bus passes. And I remember one time we got lost trying to get this printer. We got a printer, but we took the wrong bus to get home and so it took us three hours to get home and that was crazy. Yeah girl, struggles.

Danielle's reflection unveils some of the many challenges that first-generation, working class, and college-going families endure as they humbly attempt to progress in their studies. They face, for example, unique needs for meeting tuition expenses and non-tuition and family-related expenses such as transportation, safe and secure housing, additional food, hygiene items, medications, dependable and accessible technology resources (i.e., sufficient computing devices for all students and stable internet access), and dependent healthcare, among others expenses. Though Chicana/Latina women often pursue a college degree in the hopes of one day improving their employment and earning prospects, families, like the Abraham, often incur overwhelming debt and are left financially under supported and disillusioned in the process.

Persistent Funding Challenges

During the Summer of 2014 and in her first year of undergraduate study the Abraham family struggled financially, but Gaby was eligible to apply for a need-based Grant for Parenting Students at UCLA. This distinct funding award, reserved for low-income students, provided \$2,000 in additional grant funding for the academic year to, "Needy undergraduate students who

have dependent children under the age of 18” (University Grants, n.d.). However, in her second year of undergraduate study at UCLA, Gaby’s son, Adam, turned eighteen and with this coming of age came a shift in Gaby’s parenting student status. The stringent age limitations of the Parenting Student Grant made it such that Gaby became ineligible for the funding resources though she desperately needed the extra support to help pay for her own schooling, the tuition of her two children, and the non-tuition expenses she and her family incurred. In the quote below, Gaby offers commentary on the immediate parenting student status changes that went into effect when her son turned eighteen years old:

Ya no me consideraban parenting [student]... nada más un año y después, [mi hijo] cumplió 18... Ya era adulto, entonces [yo] ya no [calificaba para] los grants de Parenting [Student]... Entonces, ese era otra cosa que yo enfrenté, que yo ni era Parenting [Student] porque ya mis hijos se consideraban adultos. Y no recibía tampoco la ayuda como Parenting [Student]. Aunque yo fui [a la Oficina de Financial Aid] y les dije esas cosas, no se pudieron cambiar. Dijeron que no. Sí, fui con ellos para hablarles. Fui con ellos para decirles. Y dijeron que no, que, “Cuando tus hijos ya tienen 18 años, tú ya no son considerado [Parenting Student].” Pero [les dije,] “Son estudiantes!” “Eso, no importa,” dijo [la consejera]. Entonces, no tenía, no me daban el grant de Parenting [Student] tampoco. Aunque seguía siendo Parenting [Student] en realidad ¿verdad?

I was no longer considered a Parenting [Student]... for a year I was, and then [my son] turned 18... He was already an adult, so I no longer [qualified for] Parenting [Student] grants. So, that was another thing that I faced, the fact that I was no longer classified as a Parenting [Student]. My children were already considered adults and I did not receive help [from the institution] as a Parenting [Student] either. Even though I went [to the Financial Aid Office] and presented my case, they said it [my Parenting Student status] couldn’t be changed. They said no. Yes, I went with them to talk to them. I went with them to tell them. And they said no, “When your children are 18 years old, you are no longer considered a [Parenting Student].” And [I told them], “They are college students though!” The counselor replied, “That doesn’t matter.” So, I didn’t have, they didn’t give me the Parenting [Student] grant. Although I was still a Parenting [Student].

In this quote, we hear how Gaby petitioned endlessly to the Financial Aid Office and to the Parenting Student support programs on campus to receive supplemental financial support, but she was denied the much-needed funding. By denying Gaby funding of this nature when her son turned eighteen, UCLA essentially erased a central component of Gaby’s academic identity—

that of a parenting student. Moreover, though Obama-era educational policies were designed to broaden access and retention for students and families from historically underserved backgrounds, these efforts were not enough to support the Abraham women on their college pathways. This example reifies that funding structures as they exist at institutions across the nation like UCLA often widen retention gaps for parenting students, motherscholars, and other students with dependents. The institutional and federal neglect of Students of Color has been documented time and time again, but I denote Gaby Abraham's experience with the Financial Aid Office and the Parenting Student support programs as the second documented case of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar (and son-scholar) erasure in this birthstory, after the de Uriarte case of the late 1970s. Readers will recall, in the 1970s when all three de Uriarte members were in college at the same time, Mercedes explicitly denoted that three members of her family were in college (she, Cristina, and her son,) but her Pell Grant aid was always delayed. If we compare the de Uriarte recollection with the Abraham experience, we began to see a pattern of institutional neglect unfolding. Approximately fifty years after Mercedes's time at in college, in the mid-2010s, Gaby endured a similar experience where institutional funds were completely withheld and retracted per institutional funding policies.

I argue, failing to create opportunities for students to communicate the particulars about their family arrangements can impact the resources that student parents and students with dependents receive. Because motherscholars and daughterscholars are often forced to see one another as their primary source of academic, social, and financial stability, these scholar families can become overburdened with competing responsibilities and inundated with challenges that they should not have to face alone. This often leaves motherscholars, daughterscholars, and their families no choice but to lean on each other for support. Sometimes

though, this can make educational journeys even more perilous than they need to be for both mothers and daughters.

Indeed, Danielle and Gaby's reflections about the perils of attending college as a scholarfamily pushes us to be critical in our approach to answering the following question: How are we supporting Chicana/Latina scholars to make sure that they thrive financially, academically, and personally, across generations? The Abraham women answer this question by stating that they did not find adequate support at UCLA. Instead, they looked to each other for support. In the next section, we hear how Danielle undertook different forms of raced and gendered labor to ensure her mother's and her own degree objectives were met. Danielle teaches us, the distribution of this labor often falls heavily on the shoulders of daughters—particularly on those of the eldest daughters.

Chicana Daughterwork

Readers will recall that Danielle is the eldest and only daughter in the Abraham family. During her pláticas, Danielle articulated that she assumed tremendous levels of academic, financial, and emotional responsibility to keep her family afloat during the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years. For example, she provided editorial support when her mother had a hard time crafting course assignment; she took out student loans to fund her tuition but also to fund non-tuition expenses the family incurred as a whole; and she served as a “listening wall” and “confidant” for her mother during personally and academically stressful times. By extending to her mother this raced and gendered labor, Danielle engaged in what I call, Chicana daughterwork. I contend, much like Chicana motherwork (Caballero et al., 2019), Chicana daughterwork encompasses care work that daughters do in the home, in the classroom, in the community, and with themselves. Chicana daughterwork is expansive and intergenerational. It is

expansive because daughters do not daughter alone when they have help from partners, relatives, or friends; it is intergenerational because it includes the histories of Chicana/Latina sisters, cousins, tias, and other femmes in the community.

During the joint college years, Danielle leveraged her daughterwork to support her mother in very materials ways, but this often meant Danielle had to put her own academics and aspirations to the side. Though she appreciated all the work her daughter put in to ensure her holistic wellbeing, Gaby often felt guilty for having to “over-rely” on her daughter for academic, financial, and emotional support during their joint time in college. In the quote that follows, we hear Gaby underscore the collaborative nature of Chicana/Latina motherscholaring and daughterscholaring:

Yo tengo que agradecer mucho a mi hija, y a mis dos hijos porque hemos trabajado como equipo. Sin la ayuda y el apoyo de ellos, creo que no viera sido posible. Porque no era sólo apoyo también, de repente, académico, porque, tú sabes, ¿verdad? Que mis hijos, muchas veces tenía que editar mis papeles o cosas así . . . También apoyo económico con los préstamos que las dos pedimos y que ahorita debemos mucho dinero, por eso- Para que... etuviera la experiencia de estar en una universidad como UCLA. Porque, aunque te dan los tuition y todo, no es suficiente.

I have to really appreciate my daughter, [really,] my two children, because we have worked as a team. Without their help and support, I think it would not have been possible. Because it was not only academic support they provided. Many times, they had to edit my papers or things like that. It was also financial support they offered, with the loans that we both asked for and that right now we owe a lot of money back so that . . . I would have the experience of being at a university like UCLA. Because, although they give you the tuition and everything, it is not enough.

In this quote, it is clear that Danielle played a very critical role in supporting Gaby during their joint college years. Danielle provided, for example, monetary support, as well as instrumental and emotional support to ensure her mother had the means and resources to move forward in her academic goals. With her raced and gendered daughteral labor, Danielle ensured that both generations of women (she and her mother) had access to the means and resources for continuing

on their individual and joints path of higher education. Indeed, Danielle’s daughterwork helped to foster a “team spirit” in the Abraham family and it led to the family’s academic mobility, but extending this sort of labor did come at a cost for Danielle.

During her individual plática, Danielle shared that her body, mind, and spirit often felt taxed by the daughterwork responsibilities incurred to her as the oldest child and eldest daughter in the family. Though she did recall feeling tired from offering to her family her daughterwork, Danielle confessed the following testament with conviction,

The fact is, I would never want my mom to feel like she couldn’t count on me so that’s why I think that a lot of the things that I’ve done in my life that have been for my family is due to the fact that I don’t want her to ever feel like she can’t turn to me for things because I want us to still be a team.

Danielle’s quote reminds us that Chicana/Latina daughters who attend college alongside their mothers contend with fulfilling roles and responsibilities tied to their designation as cultural, academic, and financial brokers in the home. Though low income, single-parent households with family members enrolled in college at the same time, like the Abraham family, face unique circumstances in meeting basic needs that are often overlooked, cooperation and familial sacrifices are centerfold in the motherscholar-daughterscholar dynamic. Yes, daughterscholars may “get frustrated with [balancing] a lot of things in my life,” as Danielle says, but their raced and gendered labor, and their material contributions are important because they move Families of Color forward in their academic careers. The Abraham women teach us that the journey to scholarship is perilous for Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters who attend college together, but there are also deep feelings of love and joyous commitments to engage in care practices that uplift one another during challenging life epochs.

The Abraham Family Legacy

Gaby and Danielle Abraham surpassed the personal and academic challenges which characterized their individual and joint time in college when they successfully graduated from UCLA with their bachelors degrees in June of 2017, during the same graduation ceremony. Though they did not know it at the time, the Abraham women made history as a notable quadfecta of academic “firsts” for the University of California at Los Angeles. To my knowledge, Gaby and Danielle are the first Chicana/Latina nontraditional and transfer scholar mother-daughter pair to have matriculated into UCLA in the same academic term (Fall 2014), to have been part of the same academic summer bridge program cohort (AAP Freshman Transfer Summer Program class of 2014), to have worked alongside one another as mentors in a social justice-oriented transfer center on campus (AAP CCCP), and to have graduated alongside one another in the same class (2017). Without a doubt, Danielle’s description of her motherscholar-daughterscholar experience rings true:

Our stories are more powerful together than they are apart since we’re *madre e hija*...Yes, I’m first generation, I’m a transfer student, but once my mom got in the mix, it made [the experience] much more because we’re mom and daughter and now we’re able to collaborate and tell our story together.

Conclusion

This chapter assumed a chronologic and thematic approach to better understand the socio-political context of the 2000s through the early 2010s, the time during which the daughters were born, reared, and began matriculating into higher education spaces. In this chapter, I introduced ten daughterscholars and spoke on their early educational journeys. Coupled with a discussion about the mother’s raced and gendered care practices during the child rearing years, this chapter detailed how the Abraham family leverage their motherwork and daughterwork to advocate for their shared humanity and educational mobility. Throughout this chapter, I

highlighted some standout moments which characterized Danielle and Gaby Abraham's joint time as transfer scholars. From the Abraham family narrative, we begin to learn about the perils and joys Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars endured during their parallel experiences in college during the 2010s and 2020s. The discussion on the child-rearing years (2000s–2010s) and the Abraham Family case study sets the context for a more nuanced conversation about how the motherscholars and daughterscholars straddled the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, and scholarhood during the 2010s and 2020s. In the chapter that follows, I backtrack slightly to the year 2012, and I engage us in a discussion about how the remaining six families in this birthstory similarly felt guilt, shame, sacrifice, joy, resilience, and resistance during the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s and early 2020s.

CHAPTER SEVEN: NAVIGATING THE BORDERLANDS: THE GOOD MOTHER AND
GOOD DAUGHTER DILEMMA, 2010s–2020s

While we continue to go to school together, I can describe this time as both exciting & terrifying. It's exciting because we are both going through our educational journeys, learning about our passions, and [we] can share [our] laughs/tears over classes . . . [But] most of my experiences with both of us in college/school [during COVID] are not good ones. I feel like I'm misunderstood & under supported because of the family's lack of adaptability as I work 2 jobs, try to continue extracurriculars, be a full-time student, and also [be] the supportive daughter you need all while navigating the pandemic. Even prior [to] COVID, I think that expectation of obedience & being a caregiver was there . . . I think what's most frustrating is this idea that because you've done/been doing it (school & work & kids) that I, too, should just take it. But I shouldn't & don't need to. I don't have kids, I have siblings.

(Alanis Titus, Daughterscholar to Sofia Titus)

During the Summer of 2020, in the early months of the COVID-19 global health pandemic and amid the anti-Black racism uprisings⁸⁴, Alanis Titus penned a vulnerably honest letter to her mother, Sofia. In the letter, Alanis detailed some of the struggles she endured while balancing her responsibilities as the second eldest daughter in a household of nine, a young scholar enrolled at an elite public research institution in California, and an emerging medical professional. The undertones in Alanis' letter understandably point to feelings of frustration which accompanied responsibilities to “work 2 jobs, try to continue extracurriculars, work as a full-time student, and also be the supportive daughter you need,” during such a stressful life era. Alanis' raw recollections unveil to us that personal, financial, academic, and familial hardships sometimes cloud the mother-daughter relationship for families with women enrolled in college at the same time.

⁸⁴ In the summer of 2020, the United States saw a wave of anti-Black racism activism unfold as the nation learned about and protested the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other Black Americans. Despite a worsening COVID-19 pandemic, tens of thousands took to the streets to demand change- first in Minneapolis, and later in New York, Washington, California, and throughout the world.

Like Alanis, all the daughters in this study confessed feeling conflicted about fulfilling personal and academic responsibilities at different points in their college trajectories. The daughterscholars desperately wanted to prioritize their educational advancement by focusing attention on their studies, but they also wanted to support their siblings and their mother by assuming caretaking responsibilities in the home as they were socialized to believe “good daughters” (Espinoza, 2010) would and should. The motherscholars similarly expressed feeling torn about materializing their post-secondary goals because these pursuits often came at the cost of not being physically and mentally present for their children and spouses. Francisca Valencia, and the other mothers confessed, compounding the rigor and stresses of seeking post-secondary degrees were feelings of “[nervousness] about [their children] considering me [a] ‘bad mom’ because I was going to school,”. While straddling the borderlands of motherhood and scholarhood, the motherscholars feared their children might remember the college years as a time their mother “abandoned or neglected [them] when I was in school, especially when they were younger.”

During the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s to the 2020s, the women in this study challenged traditional expectations of what constitutes a “good mother” (Anaya, 2011) and a “good daughter” (Espinoza, 2010). With their motherwork and daughterwork⁸⁵, they (re)crossed the borderlands of family structures, cultural traditions, gender constructions, social class, and the academe and thereby redefined what it means for Chicana/Latina families to support one another while on their collegiate pathways. Making sense

⁸⁵ In Chapter Seven, I operationalized Chicana/Latina daughterwork as gendered care work which includes the care daughters do in the home, classroom, communities, and with themselves. I argue that daughterwork is both intergenerational and expansive because it encompasses the histories, practices, and rituals learned and from an enacted by sisters, primas, tias, mothers, abuelas, and other femmes in the community.

of the raced and gendered practices of teaching, learning, and care that the women developed and imparted to one another during the joint college years is the focus of this final chapter.

As a reminder to the reader, the families who participated in this research led me to identify two key themes which characterized their individual and joint higher education experiences. The women spoke and wrote about the joys and perils of mothering and daughtering as non-traditional college students, and about the personal and academic dilemmas they experienced straddling cultural borderlands. In Chapter Seven, I spoke to the first theme. In this fourth and final chapter of the four-part birthstory, I focus on the second theme. In the sections that follow, I explain how my collaborators leveraged their motherwork and daughterwork to facilitate their emotional, mental spiritual, physical, and academic wellbeing during the joint college era. As I move us along the birthstory chronology, I speak on themes related to (a) socializing daughters for the academe, (b) leveraging daughterwork and motherwork to facilitate the family's collective retention and persistence, (c) engaging in mothering and daughtering while being physically away from one another, (d) embracing roles reversals during the joint college years, and (e) and assuming sacrificial positions to facilitate the family's academic success. Towards the end of this chapter, I engage in a praxis of reciprocity by humbly re-centering my own motherscholar-daughterscholar educational life story. In this final mother-daughter portrait, I speak on how the COVID-19 global health crisis impacted the ways the women in my family and I negotiated our roles as mothers, daughters, sisters, and scholars in 2021. Finally, I conclude the chapter by stating that as we employed distinct raced and gendered care practices, my collaborators and I calcified an intergenerational legacy of Chicana/Latina maternal and daughteral educational resilience. I contend, as we developed and imparted motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies on the borderlands, we reified the importance of the

matrilineage and daughtrilineage. Now, in a celebration of our resistance and tenacity, I invite us to disentangle the “good mother” and “good daughter” dilemma in this fourth and final chapter of the birthstory. I begin this discussion by re-introducing the Leyva Family who will lead us into a conversation about socializing daughters to the academe; this part of the birthstory picks up in the year 2012.

Socializing Daughters for the Academy: The Leyva Family, 2012–2015

Readers will recall that Frida Leyva was the first motherscholar (after Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte) to begin her college journey in the fall of 1983 at Mt. Saint Mary’s College in Los Angeles, California. In the Spring of 1987, she graduated as a new motherscholar with her bachelor’s degree in Nursing and by 1992, Frida had given birth to her second and third child, Maria (born 1989) and Nela (born 1992). The three Leyva children (Frida’s eldest son included) grew up in a working-class household in the San Gabriel Valley, a suburb east of East Los Angeles with their mother and father. Though Frida was juggling course work and employment obligations at different periods during the late 1980s and throughout the 2000s, she remained steadfast in prioritizing her children’s academic enrichment by inviting them to participate in learning opportunities that took place in formal and informal educational settings. For example, while she was in her Master of Nursing Practice program at CSU Los Angeles in the late 1990s, Frida invited her young, school-aged children to the local public library so they could complete homework together. Moreover, when her professors requested that students bring in children to serve as models during the program’s pediatric clinical exam practice sessions, Frida brought her children and all three were compensated for their labor with “a gift card and cookies at the end of the [clinical] trial.”

Finally, when her children were sick or wanted their mother's attention, Frida set aside her coursework to extend an embrace and provide a warm meal. With her motherwork, Frida taught her children an important lesson: "Never fear trying something new, especially if it will benefit you and your family." By integrating these raced and gendered care practices into her everyday life as a motherscholar, Frida socialized her young children to form part of a collegiate community early on in their lives.

Maria and Nela progressed through California K-12 public schools throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, and near the end of her high school journey in the late 2000s, Maria was well on her way to begin her own college endeavor. When asked to reflect on her early motives for pursuing a college degree, Maria wrote the following in letter to her mother, "Watching you fulfill your career goals [while mothering three children] inspired me to explore my interest at a young age." Like her mother, Maria was accepted to and began her undergraduate coursework at CSU Northridge the fall semester immediately following her high school graduation in 2007. Three years later, in the Fall of 2010, Nela started her post-secondary journey at Rio Hondo College, and two years after that, in the Fall of 2012, Frida returned to college for the third and last time to pursue her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from Azusa Pacific University (APU, Azusa, California). The year 2012 marked an especially important year for the Leyva household because it signaled the start of a life era wherein three of the five members in the Leyva family would embark on their undergraduate and graduate journeys together.

Though Maria's college journey overlapped with that of her mother and her younger sister for approximately half a year, this joint 2012 experience left an indelible mark on her perception about the possibilities that emerge when Families of Color attend college together. From personal experience, the Leyva daughters learned that college-going was a family affair.

Therefore, Maria was shocked when an “old, white man, dean of [the Communication Disorders and Sciences] department,” at CSUN whom she was requesting a letter of recommendation from offered cautionary advice urging Maria to refrain from integrating non-academic responsibilities in her undergraduate lifestyle. On her kitchen table and with her mother, Frida, listening in on our plática mere feet away, Maria shared with me the following,

When we would go to [the dean] for letters of recommendation, he would say, “Well, you need to stop working. You need to stop dating. You need to just be on your own... You will not be able to complete the program if you have ‘baggage’” ... I wasn’t married. I didn’t have a baby yet, but still, [those words] affect you.

Though Maria was at the time unmarried and did not have children of her own, the dean cautioned that she steer clear from “working,” “dating,” and holding onto unnecessary “baggage,” because these practices would lead to her academic and professional demise. In Maria’s recantation of her microaggressive experience with the “old, white man, dean of the department,” we hear how womanhood and caregiving are conflated such that Maria’s capabilities as a student were called into question and her competence as a woman capable of making autonomous decisions about her life and body were delegitimized. Moreover, we hear how notions of professionalism and presumed academic success are tied to stereotypically male characteristics, such as espousing individualism, being objective, rational, and punctual (Vega, 2019). Maria’s reflection further reifies just how insidiously university and college cultures privilege heterosexual, white, male bodies in the academy by integrating racialized and gendered notions of who belongs there, and who does not (Télez, 2015). Unfortunately, the negative psychological and physiological effects of raced and gendered microaggressions can “affect” Chicana/Latina perceptions about their academic abilities (Pérez Huber & Cueva; Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Watson, 2019) and can, as Maria notes, lead Chicanas/Latinas to feel as though they must choose between family and school, or endure failure in both aspects of their

lives (Anaya, 2011; Caballero et al., 2019; Espinoza, 2010; Vega, 2019). Maria and Nela had been socialized to believe fragmenting parts of the self (motherhood, daughterhood, scholarhood, etc.) as the dean had prescribed was unnecessary given that that had lived a lifetime as daughters to a Chicana/Latina motherscholar who was at present a doctoral candidate. However, Nela, the youngest daughter in the Leyva household knew all too well the challenges that came with fulfilling reproductive labor (i.e., cleaning the home, cooking for family, caregiving), while working and completing college work at the same.

In her research, Patricia Hill Collins (2000) expands our understanding of Black women's raced and gendered work to include paid labor (productive labor) and unpaid labor (reproductive labor). She argues, reproductive labor is work often associated with caregiving and domestic housework including but not limited to cleaning, cooking, childcare, and the unpaid domestic labor force. Black and Chicana/Latina women's paid and unpaid work (productive and reproductive labor) emerge as important features of Black and Brown political economy (Caballero et al., 2017, 2019; Collins, 2000). Nela and her father were most responsible for tending to reproductive labor in the household because they were physically home more than Frida and Maria were. During her individual *plática*, Nela recalled having a bit of trouble balancing these responsibilities. But the challenges that came with the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar experience did not overshadow the joy she felt going attending college alongside her mother and sister.

When asked about an image that comes to mind during their joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years, Nela described the warm, sleepy, evenings she spent sitting beside her mother in the family living room. Providing a visual image of one such memory, she recalled, "it was in the nighttime, the TV was on, we were both studying... We both fell asleep. You know,

after a long day at work, studying right after... shows you the dedication you have for your goal.” In a letter written to her mother during the group plática, Nela continued to express her appreciation for the joint college years by stating the following, “Although you had [an academic] workload of your own, you’d always have the time to help me and answer any questions I had. I thank you for that. You have truly inspired me to be the best I can be.” Though Nela did share with me that she sometimes felt guilty for “disturbing” her mother and asking for support in clarifying nursing-related concept (they were both aspiring towards Nursing related degrees), she deeply appreciated that Frida prioritized her children despite the competing academic, professional, and personal endeavors Frida juggled.

Frida recalls a slightly different version of the motherscholar-daughterscholar experience when compared to that which Nela describes. In Frida’s recollection about the joint college years, we hear downcast mentions of guilt and shame, but a similar appreciation for the opportunity to have sought an academic goal alongside her children. Frida offers her reflection in the quote below,

To be honest, it’s a selfish picture. It’s me up in the living room, staying late, reading, or doing homework or something, and dozing off. [My husband] is already asleep, Nela’s probably in her room doing her studying and Maria’s off in her dorm [at CSUN], hopefully studying. So, it’s a selfish picture, the late nights being up, studying... [It’s selfish] because you’re a mom and a wife, you’re not there physically. It’s taking away time from your family, your spouse, to study.

Frida references feeling guilty for not being present for her children and her husband in the ways that align with socially acceptable beliefs about motherhood and parenthood. Traditionally, husbands and fathers are assumed to be the primary breadwinners and to have wives who serve as primary caregivers to their children. Mothers who are scholars, face a more complex reality; they are forced to take on a “double duty” (tending to home and schoolwork) and are often made to believe that they must decide between the two (Finkel and Olswang 1996; Hewlett 2002;

Williams 2000). Teary eyed during the group plática and in the presence of her daughters, Frida verbalized that she had made tireless attempts to be physically, emotionally, and spiritually available for her children and husband while in her doctoral program, but she still admitted having made several mistakes along the way, at her family's expense.

Frida's daughters shared they firmly believe that Frida did the best that she could to be present for her loved ones in such ways as tending to her schoolwork late into the evenings when the family was asleep and by studying in the family home (as opposed to more isolated in spaces like the library or a local coffee shop). Regardless of these attempts, Frida's decisions to privilege college-going for so many years weighed on her. Ever their mothers' greatest advocate, the Leyva daughters both took a moment during the plática to verbally affirm Frida for making her academic and professional aspirations a reality. As a follow up to this conversation, Maria wrote the following letter to her mother,

August 29, 2020

Hi Mom,

I am grateful for all of your accomplishments in your career. I just want you to know that I never felt like I didn't have a present mom. I understood and knew why you were away sometimes when we were younger. I will continue to help you and support your decision to continue your career. Thank you for showing us that anything is possible and that whatever we choose to do, to do it with love and patience.

Maria

After crafting this affirmative letter, Maria read the message aloud to her mother in the group plática setting. Voice cracking and tears streaming down her cheeks, Frida thanked her daughters for all the work they put in to make her dreams of becoming Dr. Frida Leyva (class of 2016) a reality. Indeed, by extending messages of affirmation to their mother and engaging in raced and gendered carework throughout their journey, Maria and Nela helped facilitate their mother's educational success. I argue, even in the plática setting, Maria and Nela leveraged their

daughterwork to remind Frida that they indeed felt loved and supported during the joint college years- despite Frida's belief in the contrary. Maria and Nela, of course, were able to do this because their mother had, for years, modeled what it meant for a Chicana/Latina to extend affirmative raced and gendered carework to the family.

**Chicana Daughterwork—Facilitating Motherscholar Retention and Persistence: The
Valencia Family, 2014–2016**

Fifty miles east of the Levya household in Riverside County, the Valencia women also found themselves learning how to navigate the world as a family of college-going women. Like the Leyva daughters, the Valencia daughters (Priscilla and Paulina), their youngest brother, and their father were accustomed to a life in the academe. Francisca, the family matriarch, was a tenured community college professor who had earned two academic degrees while the girls were growing up, and in the fall of 2013 (a year after the Leyva women started their joint journey,) Francisca returned to graduate school after gaining admission to a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) program offered through the Chicago School of Professional Psychology (Pasadena, California). Priscilla, the elder of the two Valencia sisters had previously received her BA from the University of California at Riverside (UCR, Class of 2011) and had recently transitioned to working fulltime alongside her mother in the same community college in Riverside County. Paulina, the youngest of the Valencia women, was a recent high school graduate and young college student who was interested in the Biological Sciences. During the 2013–2014 school year, all three of the Valencia women were affiliated either professionally (Francisca & Priscilla) or academically (Paulina) with the same Riverside County community college.

The Valencia family had grown so accustomed to occupying academic spaces in post-secondary settings that it did not come as a surprise to the family when Priscilla made the

decision to enroll in a Master's program at California Polytechnic University at Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) in the fall of 2014. Priscilla was trained as a Sociologist as an undergraduate at UCR, so when the time came for her to engage an analysis of her early socialization to the academy during her individual plática, she proudly stated she was “bound” to pursue a graduate degree and faculty line because she had “lived a lifetime in academia.” Thus, in 2014, two years after the Leyva Family, and four years after the Abraham Family became a motherscholar-daughterscholar duo, Priscilla, Paulina, and Francisca became the third motherscholar-daughterscholar group in this story to start their journey together. The Valencias were also the first of two motherscholar-daughterscholar trios in their extended family⁸⁶ to have embarked on their joint college trajectory.

The Valencia family dynamics were comparable to the Leyva and Abraham families in that the daughters leveraged their daughterwork to facilitate their mother's educational retention and persistence. In their individual and joint pláticas, both Valencia daughters spoke on different facets of their Chicana/Latina daughterwork. Their daughterwork involved (a) nurturing their mother and sister's mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing, and (b) helping facilitate the family's academic and professional wellbeing.

Daughterwork as Emotional Support

The Valencia daughters nurtured their mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing by extending emotional support to another (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). For example, Paulina (along with her father, Francisca's husband) often lead meal prepping efforts so that Francisca

⁸⁶ Francisca's younger sister, Lola, and Lola's two daughters (Mia and Luna) became a Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar trio in 2017. Lola is a Doctor of Nursing Practice who graduated from a private institution, Mia is a PhD on the cusp of graduating from the University of California, and Luna is continuing her undergraduate coursework as a Transfer Scholar at the University of California as well.

and Priscilla had food to pack for long days at school.⁸⁷ Members of the entire five-person household also contributed equitably to the household labor. That is, they took turns cleaning the house, purchasing groceries, and caring for their pets. The Valencia family was also intentional about planning their academic schedules around “Family Nights” which took place every Friday evening. Across all their pláticas, the Valencia women shared that no matter what was going on in their academic and professional lives, “the world stopped for the evening,” on Friday when the entire family came together to engage in mindfulness activities. Some of these mindfulness practices included, watching movies together, going on beach trips, going for a hike together, accompanying their mother to the local Catholic church, and engaging in “intellectual conversations,” or “family debates” about current events. Though putting their entire world on pause for a single Friday evening may not seem like a lot to ask for, it really is a big ask for a family of scholar-professionals who had papers to write, labs to finish, and deadlines to meet, week after week.

The entire Valencia family knew that carving time to participate in family functions was important for the family collective, but Priscilla and Paulina firmly believed that these mindfulness activities were especially important because they helped Francisca contend with the stresses of schoolwork and life as a mother and wife. In the group plática, Priscilla and Paulina shared that they just, “knew when it was time to take their mother to the water,” so she could dip her feet in the fresh Southern California coastal beaches because they “sensed” their mothers anxious and overly stressed energy. I argue, Priscilla and Paulina’s daughteral intuition and feminized labor promoted holistic healing and mindfulness for the Valencia family in its entirety,

⁸⁷ According to Francisca and Priscilla, no sub in the world is comparable to Paulina’s homemade sandwich. These sandwiches, as Francisca and Priscilla say, are made with love, and supremely delicious especially during lunch time.

but especially for the family matriarch, Francisca, whom they took particular care of to ensure she would not “burnout” too quickly. Carework practices of this nature were central to bringing balance to the women’s mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

Daughterwork as Instrumental Support

Because they were scholars navigating U.S. higher education systems and experts in their respective areas of study, the Valencia daughters were also in a privileged position to offer instrumental support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003) to one another. During the joint college years, the Valencias formed what they called a “collaborative academic subcommittee” in the home. In the Valencia family “subcommittee,” there were seasoned tutors (Priscilla), academic counselors (Francisca), and tenured faculty (Francisca) who were working collaboratively with one another to ensure they all met their academic goals while preserving their humanity throughout the entire process. Indeed, the Valencia women were family, but they were also “peers,” and “vulnerable,” sometimes “confused” students who leaned on each other for academic support. For example, when Priscilla needed an academic peer group to study with late into the evening, Francisca and Paulina were there with her studying in the household’s den-turned-office. When Paulina needed someone to brainstorm ideas with for a term assignment, Priscilla and Francisca were engaging with her asking thought-provoking questions.

Finally, when Francisca needed an extra pair of eyes to review the flow and clarity of written assignments, Priscilla and Paulina would, “jump onto a shared Google Drive” and all three women would review the paper together. Often, the women had their own assignments to complete, but they all made time to be present for each other during critical moments in their individual academic careers by leveraging their motherwork and daughterwork. In a handwritten

letter capturing a memorable moment which characterized her time in college with her daughters, Francisca described the peer-like relationship she and her daughters cultivated:

August 16, 2019

Going to school together [with] my [daughters] was one of the best experiences of my life! Again, I really appreciate having an opportunity to have such intellectual conversations [with] them... There were so many memorable moments during our journey, but one that I remember clearly was when I had to write a (long and difficult) research paper my first quarter in the doctoral program. I had been out of school for several years and I was no longer [used] to the rigor of academic writing. As a mom I was so used to be the strong one and the one that can figure out the answer, but that night I recall feeling vulnerable [and] recognizing that I was a student once again [and] it took me a “minute” [to] recognize in front of my daughters that I did not know where to start, that the instructor was not clear on his instructions, [and] that I was not sure if I was on the right path. In other words, that I was a confused student. We were on the second floor [of our family home], all of us working on our assignments and despite the fact that it was way past midnight they both took the time to [review] the prompt d[and] part of my responses. Paulina [and] Priscilla [also] allowed me to hug them. In a moments time, there we were giving each other a group hug [and] encouraging one another.

In this recollection, we hear Francisca admitting she felt forced to navigate feelings of insecurity during her tenure as a doctoral candidate. She describes how she was “used” to “being the strong one” in the mother-daughter trio, but when she became a student for the third and final time in her life, Francisca found herself feeling “vulnerable” and leaning into her daughters’ comforting presence for emotional and instrumental support.

The Valencia’s collaborative approach to deconstructing traditional gender norms and family power dynamics which position parents and caregivers as all-knowing stood as a direct challenge to traditional parent-child constructions (Matias & Nishi, 2018). Through this example, we see how the maternal-daughteral relationship is characterized by respect for each other’s autonomy and a deep-seated interest in nurturing the collective, academic wellbeing. In their individual pláticas and in the group discussion, several of the other women in this study referred to this collaborative process wherein mothers and daughters provided instrumental forms of

support to one another such as committing to late night study sessions and taking turns proofreading papers. Thus, for the motherscholars and daughterscholars, offering academic and emotional support of this nature was a common practice.

Throughout 2014 to 2016, the Valencia daughters came to learn that their mothers' persistence and retention in the doctoral program was deeply tied to the daughterwork. As we heard in the examples above, the Valencia daughters' raced and feminized labor centered self-care, healing, communal survival and accountability and it benefited the family in its entirety, but especially the women who formed part of the mujer-oriented network. The Valencia family example affirms that Chicana/Latina daughterwork, is expansive, intergenerational, "rooted in *familia*, community, and *cultura*" such that their feminized labor, "becomes a representation of [daughteral] praxis and resistance in contemporary U.S. society" (Téllez, 2019). I argue that their daughterwork can be seen as an educational intervention that (a) helps facilitate Chicana/Latina retention and persistence in higher education and (b) narrows the gaps in the Chicana/o and Latina/o educational pipeline. Ultimately, the Valencia mother-daughter dynamics teach us that for Motherscholars of Color, Daughterscholars are central to their retention and persistence in higher education. Indeed, their collaborative approach to academic femtorship led Francisca to become "Dr. Mom" in the Fall of 2016, Priscilla to earn a master's degree in the Spring of 2016, and Paulina to earn an Associate's Degree for Transfer in Spring of 2016.

Mothering and Daughtering Across Geographies

As we heard in the previous exemplars, the daughterscholars were intentional about extending carework to their mothers during the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar era. However, we have also heard that the motherscholars were intentional about ensuring their daughters, and their other children, were healthy in body, mind, and spirit. Readers will recall

that none of the daughterscholars had biological or adopted children of their own during the joint mother-daughter college years, but unlike the daughters, the motherscholars⁸⁸ had several children to care for. Therefore, the mothers found themselves navigating the world as primary caregivers in relatively large households throughout the 2010s–2020s. Understandably, the motherscholars' time was split between tending to full- and part-time jobs, meeting academic responsibilities (e.g., attending classes and completing rigor coursework), and tending to all of their children (e.g., making meals, taking children to and from school, accompanying children to health examinations, paying for college tuition etc.). For the motherscholars who were caretakers to both young and adult children living geographically separate from one another, the weight of motherscholaring was even more burdensome. Such was the case for Glorita and Karla Chipi and Socorro Genoveva and Selena Nino who were both pursuing undergraduate degrees in the late 2010s.

Nurturing Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Bonds: The Chipi Family, 2018–2019

The Chipi women began their motherscholar-daughterscholar journey in the first year of the Donald J. Trump presidency, in 2017. Beginning with his presidential campaign, Trump advanced racist and sexist discourses by describing Chicanas/os and Latinas/os “criminals” and “invaders” who were a threat to national security (Gomez & Pérez Huber, 2020). The administration's racist rhetoric and inhumane immigration policies continued to propagate fear and trauma among immigrant communities and families across the U.S. The Chipi women, Peruvian nationals who immigrated to the U.S. in the 1990s, were not immune from this targeted aggression. The racialized hate directed at Chicana/o and Latina/o immigrants left Glorita feeling especially unsettled because her daughter was living miles away in Westwood, California.

⁸⁸ Socorro Genoveva is the only exception here; she is a mother to just one child, Selena.

While pursuing a BA in Political Science at UCLA, Glorita went to school and cared for her two young children and husband in Bakersfield, California. The Chipi women lived a hundred miles away from each other and the stresses of family separation weighed heavily on Glorita. Though she wanted so badly to be physically near her daughter, she also wanted to be accessible to her young sons as well. Glorita reconciled this maternal tension by accepting a full-time researcher position at UCLA and making the decision to commute back and forth between Bakersfield and Westwood, California every day. With the new job appointment, Glorita became more physically accessible to Karla who was navigating her undergraduate course of study with a chronic illness.

On October 15, 2019, the day of her individual plática, Karla proudly shared with me that she identifies as an advocate and member of the disabled community, though she did not always identify as such. Karla described how one morning during her third year of undergraduate study at UCLA, she woke up “unable to move certain muscles” in her body. This startling experience led Karla to invest a considerable amount of time meeting with medical professions at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Hospital. After numerous health scares and countless trips to the hospital, Karla was eventually diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease and so began her life-long journey with a chronic illness. Though she suffered from these health challenges, Karla managed to attend classes, work part-time, and hold a leadership position in the Hermanas Unidas de UCLA student organization. This was not an easy feat to accomplish though. During a critical time in the academic term, Karla found herself in the Intensive Care Unit but, she still allocated time to studying for exams. “Some [UCLA] professors would give me push-back about whether to allow me to finish the courses,” she said. To many, including her UCLA instructors, Karla “looked fine” though she was living with an invisible disability that impacted day to day functioning and movement. Instead of working with Karla to make accommodation in helping

her work through this challenging life era, faculty often questioned whether Karla would be able to complete her courses. Without a doubt, her disabled identity impacted the ways Karla navigated her time at UCLA, as well as her relationship with her mother.

There were several times that Karla did not want to tell her mom about her health scares because she didn't want to worry Glorita. Karla also evaded sharing details about middle-of-the-night trips to the hospital with her mother because she did not want Glorita to drive the two-hundred mile or so, four-hour, round trip from Bakersfield to Los Angeles to come and check on her. Karla knew if her mother left behind her academic (among other) responsibilities back home in Bakersfield just to "check in" on her, Glorita would be sacrificing her own educational advancement. Karla reflected on this:

There were times though where I would go to the ER and I wouldn't tell my mom because . . . It's kind of dumb to say, but I [thought to myself], "My mom just started school, she's just getting into the hang of it, she has midterms." I hated seeing that she would come all the way down [from Bakersfield to UCLA] just to check on me. Or she would be worried, or she would have to tell the professor, "I'm sorry, I can't do this paper." She had to tell the professors a lot. Honestly her professors knew a lot [of] what I was going through . . . A lot were [receptive] because they understood, obviously, a mother's crisis. I think they were receptive. In the end, she got good grades. Honestly, I don't know, really, to the extent [of the academic sacrifices she made], just because I kind of was afraid to ask . . . But maybe she took an incomplete and she finished it later. It was incredibly difficult.

Though Karla never asked her mother about the conversations she and her professors had, nor about the accommodations for submitting late assignments her mother made, Karla knew Glorita moved heaven and earth to ensure Karla's health and wellness were a priority. Thankfully, Glorita's professors knew about her parenting status and understood the gravity of her familial circumstances, so they collaborated with Glorita in make accommodations for submitting assignments and making up late work.

For Students with Dependents who find themselves juggling a host of responsibilities, a key to their success in the classroom lies in having appropriate adaptations, accommodations, and modifications made to the instruction and other classroom activities. Equity-minded educational stakeholders such as faculty and lecturers can collaborate with students to make such accommodations based upon students' individual circumstances. Such adaptations would be beneficial for helping to retain Students with Dependents and those with disabilities to ensure they have access to the resources necessary for them to move along in their academic paths. Unfortunately, equity-minded pedagogical approaches are not the norm across institutions, and within the academe more broadly. Across this study, the motherscholars and daughterscholars communicated in various iterations that faculty members and instructors (including Teaching Assistants) have historically had a limited understanding about strategies for supporting Students with Dependents and Students with Disabilities in the classroom contexts. Without these accommodations, entire families feel even more anxious than they need to be. This is simply inequitable and unnecessary.

As I previously noted, because of Karla's looming health challenges, Glorita felt torn because she wanted to be physically near Karla, but she also wanted to be physically present for her two youngest sons, one of whom has a neurodiversity. Glorita occupied the same geographic space with Karla as they were both on the UCLA campus (Karla as a student, Glorita as an employee), but really, they did not see each other much before of their competing schedule. To remedy the disconnect, Glorita made a commitment to maintain a physical *and* spiritual bond with her daughter, by returning to college. Glorita describes this decision below,

Going to school while my daughter was [pursuing her degree] in a different college gave me the sensation [of being] connected during [a] specific time which we were separated physically. [It] made me feel closer to her, experiencing... similar activities like walking from class to class, or after... class to the parking lot. [During these times, I remembered]

my daughter telling me how long [it] takes to get around [the UCLA] campus... [this] is a very good example to describe [how I connected with her].

In this recollection, we hear how Glorita nurtured the mother-daughter bond by enrolling in Bakersfield College to pursue her second bachelor's degree in 2017. Undertaking an academic endeavor similar to her daughter led Glorita to feel as though she was spiritually connecting with Karla, though they were often miles apart from one another.

Karla also made attempts to nurture the mother-daughter connection when she returned home to Bakersfield during short breaks from school. Several times throughout the quarter, Karla returned home for the weekend in the hopes of taking a rest from her schoolwork, but this often did not turn out as planned. When Karla came home, Glorita understandably wanted to spend as much time as possible with Karla, but both women knew they had academic deadlines to meet. To remedy this dilemma, Glorita created a "home study vibe" on the kitchen table and both women studied together. In her individual plática, Karla humorously offered a reflection about this experience,

When I would go home on the weekends . . . I would just want to go home for the weekend and not think about school, but there my mom was like, "Do you want to study for midterms together? I'll make coffee. We'll do a little thing." I'm sure my mom wanted that as a little connector with me, but she probably also wanted that little social aspect. Like, finally I have something that I know what you're doing.

Even though Karla would have like to have rested a bit more when she returned home, she leveraged her daughterwork by deciding to, "of course, humor her" mother by studying together at their Bakersfield home. This practice affirms that though they were often physically apart from one another, the Chipi women were intentional about engaging in care work practices to facilitate their individual and collective retention and persistence in college. These practices nurtured their bodies, their minds, and their spirits during a really challenging life era.

Over the years, the Chipi women began to mirror one another in the ways that they moved through the world and specifically how they navigated academic environment. With their motherwork and daughter, the women began to as Karla said, “raise opportunities as a family, as a unit.” Their collaborative work led Karla to graduate from UCLA with a bachelor’s degree in 2019 and Glorita energized to continue embarking on her academic pathway at Bakersfield College. Glorita shared that forming part of Karla’s college journey impacted her own academic aspirations because it reignited her desire to one day apply to a doctoral program in the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. Glorita said of Karla,

It’s like the sky doesn’t have any limits for her. She was pursuing [college] without stopping . . . I can make so many excuses on my own, [I can say no I can’t continue on my college track because] I’m a mom, I have a child, I have work, I have a husband, I have a [pet] Rokito. [But I learned that] I don’t have excuses to put in place because I see my daughter . . . if my daughter is going [to college] and is doing it, why [should I] stop? . . . It’s like when you’re asleep and you see the banner of the school that you want to go [hanging over your bed]. It’s like Karla was there as a source of energy . . . like I said, my Vitamina K.

Though it would be a few years before she can reach this academic milestone, Glorita knew she was cable of earning a PhD because Karla had modeled what it looked like for a Peruvian scholar to keep pushing forward on her academic journey.

Motherwork as Self-Care: The Nino Family, 2018–2019

Throughout this chapter, I have spotlighted some of the personal sacrifices Chicana/Latina motherscholars have had endured during the joint college years. Some of these include making financial, personal, familial, and academic sacrifices. In the previous section, we heard from Karla who confessed she did not want to hear details about the conversations Glorita had with her professors regarding assignment submission accommodations because Karla felt guilty knowing her mother was sacrificing herself and stifling (if even momentarily) her own academics. In this section, we hear from Socorro Genoveva and Selena Nino who share further

details about what this process of academic self-sacrifice looked like for motherscholars. In the Nino recollection, we hear remanence of how Socorro Genoveva reconciled feelings of guilt, shame, and self-advocacy during personally and academically challenging times for both mother and daughter.

Readers will recall that Socorro Genoveva, (unlike the other motherscholars) is mother to just one child: her beloved daughter, Selena. Because Selena lived in and completed all her primary, secondary, and undergraduate coursework in the same geographic space (Orange County, California) as her parents, she developed a strong bond with her family. Indeed, Selena's emotional and physical proximity to her parents made her feel supported and loved during moments of academic and personal hardship. However, life changed drastically for the Nino family in the Fall of 2018 when Selena moved away from the home for the first time in her life to pursue a Master's degree at UCLA.

During the individual and group pláticas, the Nino women described Selena's transition to UCLA as a challenging time for the entire family. For one, this transition denoted the family's first experience with mother-daughter separation. It also marked the beginning of Selena's long (and often lonesome) journey with a new, chronic illness. Much like Karla, throughout her time at UCLA, Selena was in and out of doctors' offices desperately hoping to pinpoint the source of her illness. All the while, she struggled to acclimate to a new university, and she was learning how to live with a roommate for the first time in her life. As the Fall 2018 quarter progressed, Selena had a hard time making real, genuine relationships with her peers; this made her feel even more homesick than she already was.

Socorro Genoveva knew that her daughter was struggling on so many fronts (personally, academically, and health-wise), but since they were living physically separate from one another,

she felt there was little she could do to help Selena beyond serving as an emotional support system. Quickly, Socorro Genoveva experienced the firsthand the challenges of caregiving and mothering from afar. When she was not working, Socorro Genoveva was: (a) on the phone with Selena receiving health and academic updates, (b) communicating with doctors about new health findings, or (c) tending to the family home. In between these incessant constraints, she attended classes at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) and tried to complete her course assignments. Sometimes, Socorro Genoveva's preoccupation with Selena's personal and academic wellbeing led her to feel anxious, stressed, and guilty about putting her academics responsibilities to the side. She reflected on these experiences:

Well, when [Selena] started [the master's program at UCLA], I was in school, too. We were going to school together. It was really hard with her being away and being not well. It was kind of like there were days that I felt like telling her to come back. I think at one point I did say to commute [to and from school], right? Then the other part of me was like. "No, she can't. If she comes back, she'll have regrets." But having her [at home] would have probably made me feel better. I would be able to focus on school more. But I didn't want to do that [to her].

As we hear in the quote above, feelings of maternal helplessness weighed heavily on Socorro Genoveva and caused her to feel overwhelmingly stressed about her daughter's health. Yes, Socorro Genoveva selflessly leveraged her motherwork to ensure that her daughter had access to the support structures and resources necessary for her progression through, and graduation from her Master's program. But these increased levels of stress made it such that Socorro Genoveva could not keep up with her own academics.

Anaya (2011) states that for Motherscholars of Color, the accumulation of competing responsibilities—expending emotional energy, working full-time outside the home (academic work), and working in the home (e.g., household work, family work)—can lead to stress and academic hardship. Unfortunately, as she juggled these competing responsibilities, Socorro

Genoveva did “fell behind” in her coursework. In the Spring of 2019 Socorro Genoveva decided, given the personal and academic circumstances complicating her life, that she would drop her classes and take a leave of absence from her program.

For a long time, Socorro Genoveva evaded sharing with Selena the news about having taken a leave of absence because she felt shameful about not being able to continue with her course of study when Socorro Genoveva constantly reminded Selena to keep pushing forward in her Master’s program. Deep down, Socorro Genoveva knew Selena would be supportive of her decision, but she still feared Selena might begin to see her as both a “bad” student and “bad” academic role model. In her 2011 research on Latina motherscholars, Anaya (2011) reminds us that motherhood has been traditionally associated with guilt and “good mothering” habits. According to dominant cultural expectations, a “good mother” is a dedicated and self-sacrificing mother who makes herself available to her children around the clock. However, fulfilling these demands in addition to academic responsibilities poses to motherscholars the dilemma of juggling between the dichotomous roles of being a student and being a mother (Anaya, 2011; Caballero et al., 2019). During the joint college years, this is exactly what Socorro Genoveva experienced: the dilemma of wanting so badly to continue her higher education pathway, and a maternal longing to fend for and safeguard her only daughter.

In Spring 2019, while Socorro Genoveva was on the leave of absence, Selena successfully graduated from UCLA with a Master of Arts degree in Education Studies. Two months post her graduation, during the group plática, Selena wrote the following letter to her mother:

Dear Mom,

I remember both of our times at school together as sort of stressful... I think it was good for us to be at school together because we could share similar frustrations. From you time

in school, I have learned 1) the value of taking care of yourself, and 2) perseverance. I think the most memorable moment of us being at school together was actually you saying you were going to drop classes, because it showed me 1) how much you thought about what I would think, and 2) how important it is to take care of yourself and make sure you are giving your all in everything you do.

Selena's written affirmation is telling. In this letter, Selena communicates that she was in fact supportive of and proud about the decision her mother made to take a leave of absence though her mother believed otherwise. In fact, during the plática, Selena communicated that she was shocked and saddened to hear that her mother had carried the burden of shame and embarrassment for so long when there was nothing to feel ashamed about. Ultimately, in this letter, Selena reminds us that Chicana/Latina care work, in the form of motherwork and daughterwork, is multifaceted and central to Chicana/Latina motherscholar and daughterscholars retention and persistence in college. That is, Chicana/Latina motherwork and daughterwork encompasses the care mothers and daughters extend to others during moments of hardship; but it also includes the "self-care, healing, community formation and communal survival and accountability" (Télez, 2019, p. 3) they extend to themselves.

Maternal and Daughteral Role Reversals: The R. Peña-Luquin Family, 2018–2020

While Selena was ending her time as a graduate student at UCLA in 2019, Erika R. Peña, mother to Cindy Luquin, was just beginning her higher education journey. For several decades, Erika and Cindy were victims to domestic violence, reproductive coercion, sexual assault, and loss. Situated at the core of these traumatic experiences were the victims, Erika, Cindy and her two younger sisters, and the perpetrator, Erika's husband/the girls' father. Beginning at a young age, Cindy took on the role of mediator and caregiver for both of her parents. She described circumstances in her childhood home as "chaotic," and "unstable," and she frequently turned to her studies positioning her schoolwork as an outlet from which to escape the tribulations of her personal life. Though Cindy's mother and father were young and struggled to gain a firm grasp

on parenthood throughout Cindy's childhood and adolescence, they were Cindy's greatest educational advocates. Both wanted to see her succeed, though they approached parenting and educational advocacy in vastly different ways. Cindy's father was "stricter" in his parenting style, and often pressured his daughters to live up to unrealistic standards of perfectionism while they were in school. Erika, on the other hand, was more "fun loving" and offered her three daughters' positive messages of affirmation especially during moments when her daughters were experiencing academic hardship. With her parent's encouragement, and with a whole lot of self-advocacy, Cindy Luquin, Beba #1, made the transition from secondary school to college in the Fall of 2003.

Immediately following her graduation from Canyon High School in Spring 2003, Cindy enrolled in College of the Canyons, a public community college in Santa Clarita, California. She spent five years at College of the Canyons and graduated with an associate degree (2008). A year later, in 2009, Cindy transferred to CSU Fullerton where she eventually earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish Health Care and Interpretation Translation (2013). Four years later, in the fall of 2017, Cindy moved on to pursue a Master's degree in Latin American Studies at CSU Los Angeles. As a graduate student, Cindy began to weave academic research, ancestral healing wisdom and practices, and medically accurate sexual health education into her studies. Over the years, Cindy Luquin both met and exceeded her goal of designing and implementing culturally comprehensive sexual education. She is at present, a certified reproductive and sexual health educator who provides culturally conscious, sexual health education and workshops primarily for Latinx communities across Southern California⁸⁹. Indeed, her 17-year road to the master's degree

⁸⁹ For more information about Cindy's teaching engagements, visit her Howl at the Womb website at <https://www.howlatthewomb.com>.

(2003 to 2020) inspired those around her, including her sisters, her students, and even her mother, to continue their own education trajectories.

Erika witnessed firsthand the sacrifices Cindy made to materialize her dream of becoming a sexual and reproductive health educator. Erika also saw her daughter reap the emotional, financial, and material benefits of pursuing her academic and professional passions. Prior to becoming a mother to three children, Erika had “this dream of going to college” which she longed so deeply to “make it a reality someday.” At 50 years old, Erika began flirting with the idea of enrolling in college herself, but she felt unsure about acting on this aspiration because she did not know if she would be able to meet the academic demands that came with pursuing an undergraduate degree in the United States. A lot of this uncertainty resulted from her “thirty-three some year” experience with verbal, emotional, and physical abuse.

For decades, several men in Erika’s life, her father and husband included, had led her to believe that she was incapable of academic success and was therefore unfit to succeed at the post-secondary level. In addition to leading Erika to believe she could not “do school,” her abuser (her husband) also led Erika to believe she was incapable of financial independence and was therefore bound to living a financially dependent life alongside him. On several occasions, Erika considered separating from her husband, but time and time again, she resorted to staying in the marriage because she feared for her safety, and she wanted to ensure her daughters had the financial support their father provided. Erika was especially concerned that her husband would stop paying for her daughters’ college tuition if she left the marriage, so she endured the emotional and physical trauma for years. By tolerating her husband and the abuse that came with living under the same roof as him, Erika became the sacrificial mother who prioritized, above all else, her daughters’ present and future. Reyna Anaya (2011) argues that traditionally,

motherhood has been closely associated with self-sacrifice and “good mothering” habits, which are usually understood in terms of white, privilege, parenting styles that include staying at home to care for children. According to the dominant cultural expectations, a “good mother” is a dedicated and self-sacrificing mother who puts the needs of her children above her own (Anaya, 2011; Anzaldúa, 2012; Caballero et al., 2019; Collins, 2000). Erika embodies the characteristics of a “good,” but “sacrificial” mother. Though her decision to stay in an abusive relationship came at a physical and psychological cost for Erika, she was driven by a commitment to protect and fend her daughters and the promises of their future successes.

Yes, Erika tolerated her husband; but she was also interested in breaking the cycle of intergenerational family abuse and urged her daughters to finish their education. She often reminded them:

Try to go to school . . . You know, this person here [my husband], he’s paying for it and try the best that you can and once you do that, you get married, and if it doesn’t work out, you do not have to depend on a man to support you because you will have the knowledge yourself, and you will defend yourself. You will help other women.

Erika knew in her heart and her soul that her three daughters would one day move on to finish their schooling and secure jobs that would allow them to be self-sufficient, but she didn’t necessarily believe that lifestyle was accessible to her. Understandably, the traumas which resulted from a life of abuse left an indelible mark on Erika’s emotional, physical, and psychological state of being. During the group plática, when Erika began to recount some of these traumatic memories and as she explained to me the nature of her relationship with her husband, her nose started bleeding. As I guiltily watched large drops of blood drip from her nose and asked if she was okay, Erika commented with the following:

Sometimes [my nose] gets like that because you know, I got so many times hit on the head. I think it’s probably one of the side effects that I got from [the abuse]. So much stress and all that stuff. Sometimes when I get too emotional, or I get too upset, my nose needs to bleed . . . And we’re not talking just tiny drops of blood, we’re talking blood

clots come out and . . . I get angry [when I] remember how much I allowed this evil man to get away with. How much abuse he did towards [my daughters], towards me, when I could've stopped it. But at the same time, he put so much fear in us, that every time he would become violent towards them or me, he would always remind us, "Don't call the police, because if you do, I'm not going to help you with your education . . . Alone, you certainly can't do it."

In this reflection, we hear how Erika began to enter a state of distress as traumatic flashbacks of her past and present were brought to the forefront during the group plática setting.

Though her abuser was neither present, nor in the near vicinity, both Cindy Luquin and I witnessed Erika's body automatically respond (as was evidenced through the nosebleed), as it once had during the original trauma. Indeed, this experience unveils just how insidiously the traumas of the abusive relationship directly impacted Erika's physical, psychological, emotional, and academic wellbeing. That is, we hear how living in a state of fear and financial dependence directly impacted Erika's higher education trajectory, as well as that of her three daughters. However, in this response we also hear Erika reclaiming her agency in this relationship of abuse. By detailing how she leveraged her motherwork to offer encouragement in the form of consejos (advice) and urging her daughters to continue their higher education pathways so as to secure their financial independence, Erika positioned her motherwork as a tool that breaks the cycle of intergenerational trauma, if even for a moment. Leveraging her motherwork, Erika sought to facilitate the healing process for herself and for her daughters in the years leading up to her college enrollment in 2019.

While her daughter, Cindy, was in the midst of completing her Master's coursework, and when Erika was fifty years old, Erika made the decision to embark on her collegiate journey in route to become a paralegal. She was feeling especially vulnerable, but she was eager to "prove all those who had doubted her wrong," and enrolled in College of the Canyons in 2019. Erika's enrollment signaled the duo's transition to becoming a motherscholar-daughterscholar pair.

During this transitional period, Erika's three daughters, Beba #1, #2, and #3 played critical roles in offering their mother messages of affirmation and encouraging Erika to pursue her academic passions. But it was Beba #1, who "helped me the most" because Cindy offered to her mother instrumental support in the form of academic femtorship in ways her other two daughters did not.

Daughterscholars as Academic Doulas

Readers will recall that Cindy Luquin is the eldest daughter and eldest child in her family; she is also the most advanced of her siblings in her academic career. Therefore, she took the lead in femtoring her mother through the college application and enrollment process in 2018. When asked to reflect on her joint time in college with Cindy, Erika said, "Going to school at the same time [as my daughter] has made me feel like when [Cindy] was little and I used to take her to school, and I feel like she's [now] walking me to school. [That's how] I feel right now that she's taking me to school, like if she were my mother." In many ways, Cindy assumed roles that a mother would typically take on when guiding a nervous, young child through grade school. That is, Cindy took on advocacy and caretaking roles similar to those a mother might normally assume, while Erika leaned into her daughter's care and protection, as a child might. For example, Cindy helped Erika set up appointments with the college assessment center; and she accompanied Erika to academic advising meetings and asked counselors important when Erika was too shy or unsure about how to communicate with the counselors. She also helped Erika chose classes and on the first day of class, Cindy walked Erika to her classroom and waved goodbye as Erika nervously entered the lecture hall. By ushering her mother along the higher education path and offering her mother emotional and instrumental support, Cindy became a sort of academic doula (Vega, 2019).

In her 2019 research on Chicana/Latina M(other)work, Christine Vega introduces the concept of the academic doula and argues that Motherscholars need a network of academic support to help them overcome the trials and tribulations of post-secondary life. Traditionally, a doula is a birthing advocate and coach who supports laboring mothers through the difficulty of contractions, discomfort, navigating the hospital, checking in with relatives, and following a birth plan. In a 2018 interview with *Melanin and Sustainable Style*, Cindy explained that “doulas, most of whom are Women of Color, and the ‘doula profession, was born out of a need to birth babies in the home to women who did not have hospital access. Many of these doulas were Indigenous women and enslaved black women helping their own community and making sure they were birthing healthy babies” (Drakeford, 2018). Traditional doulas, as Cindy describes, provide to Mothers of Color support with the emotional, physical, and logistical aspects tied to the birthing experience. In a similar fashion, academic doulas offer Motherscholars of Color support with the emotional, physical, and logistical aspects of college-going (Vega, 2019).

It is fitting to call Cindy Luquin—who is herself a sexual and reproductive health educator—an academic doula because of the ways she extended to Erika emotional and instrumental support for the purposes of achieving social justice within her own family unit. By undertaking an academic-doula approach to inform her daughterwork, Cindy affirms what Christine Vega hypothesizes in her 2019 research: academic doulas are critically relevant to femtoring for Motherscholars of Color in academia, because they (a) “mother” parenting students through the college going process and (b) affirm motherscholars by recognizing their shared humanity and work towards collective action. By offering to her mother emotional and instrumental support through her daughterwork, Cindy affirmed her mother and ensured that

Erika was seen as a person, as a woman, as a daughter, as a mother, and as a scholar. In doing so, Cindy paid careful attention to ensure every part of Erika's identity was acknowledged and valued, thereby microaffirming her existence (Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020; Vega, 2019).

In early 2020, Cindy graduated from CSULA with her Master's degree and the pair's motherscholar-daughterscholar journey came to an end. This is, of course, for the time being. The possibility still exists that one-day Cindy will return to school to pursue a doctoral degree and the women's motherscholar-daughterscholar pathways might become intertwined once more. In the meantime, Erika is progressing through an arduous academic journey, and she has encountered, among other obstacles, the convergence of four pandemics: the COVID-19 global health crisis, structural and systemic racism, looming economic collapse, and environmental catastrophe (Ladson Billings, 2020). To deal with these challenges, Erika is privileged to be able to lean into her daughter's warm and loving embrace. During moments of chaos and uncertainty, as in a post COVID-19 world, it is foreseeable that Cindy will always remind Erika to believe in her heart the following message:

Mami, you are on the right path. Be gentle with yourself, re-parent yourself by telling yourself kind words, having self-love, enjoying moments of peace in the garden, with the plants and flowers. They are a gift to you from God so you always remember that you are loved by so many people for simply existing. You will be a paralegal and remind yourself of how good you'll feel in that moment when you reach that goal. Remind yourself of how good you'll feel when you have \$\$\$\$ in your bank account and don't have to live with the fear and burden of not being dependent on someone else. Remember that you create the future you want to be the best version of Erika. That you come from a long line of strong women and the strength lives in you. To not be afraid to awaken your free spirit and allow her to come into the light.

The COVID-19 Global Health Crisis (2020)

In early January 2020, the world erupted in a frenzied panic as news related to threats from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) began to spread across the globe. Concerned about the potential impact on global health, virologists and health care professionals warned political

leaders to prepare for a crisis of epic proportion. As the first month of 2020 ended on January 30, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a health emergency of international concern. In the early days of what would eventually become the COVID-19 pandemic, then President of the United States of America, Donald J. Trump, repeatedly minimized the threat posed by the novel coronavirus. He called into question the effectiveness of masks, touted unproven treatments, and criticized his own health experts, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. To Trump's dismay, on March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a health pandemic and this designation signaled a historical turning for the world. Trump had spent months denying and mismanaging the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the March 11 WHO declaration left him no choice but to declare a national emergency. Thus, on Friday, March 13, 2020, Trump reluctantly freed billions of dollars in federal funds for disaster relief and assistance, and so began the COVID-19 era in the U.S.

In the U.S. West Coast, California Governor Gavin Newsom took swift, preemptive measures to protect the health of constituents who were especially vulnerable across his state: K-24 students. On March 13, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-26-20 into action and ordered that 5.7 million K-12 children, including more than nine out of 10 public school students, be sent home from school beginning on Monday, March 16, 2020 (State of California, 2020a). Executive Order N-26-20 also ensured that state funding for K-24 schools remained intact in the event of physical school closures. Three days after the N-26-20 ordinance went into effect, on March 16, 2020, Governor Newsom's issued Executive Order N-33-20 (known colloquially as the Stay-at-Home Order) which proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in California because of the threat of COVID-19. This new order mandated, "All individuals living in the State of California, including children, stay home or at their place of residence except as

needed to maintain continuity of operations of the critical federal infrastructures” (State of California, 2020b). From one day to the next, businesses forcibly shut down, school campuses closed completely, hospitals began filling to capacity, and homes were (re)filling in ways that were different than they had been before. Though no one could have predicted it a year or even months prior, it quickly became evident that the scale of the COVID-19 health crisis would drastically impact the healthcare, education, economic, and housing industries, among others.

The Convergences of Four Pandemics

Economic “shut-downs” like those which took shape in California in late March and early April 2020 drastically impacted the way working and college-going women navigated life in the everyday. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women across all racial and ethnic groups accounted for 55% of the 20.5 million jobs lost in April 2020. However, Women of Color fared the worst when compared to their white counterparts with unemployment rates for Black women at 16.4% and Hispanic⁹⁰ women at 20.2% (Gupta, 2020). The leisure, hospitality, education, and some parts of the health care industries endured the greatest losses and were the hardest hit by the pandemic because they shut down most abruptly. Not surprising, Women of Color represented the racial and ethnic demographic majority in these industries (Gupta, 2020). The COVID-19 crisis uniquely affected Mothers and Children of Color by disrupting routines, altering usual childcare, school and recreational activity schedules, and drastically impacting the roles and relationships which existed between members of the household. Since schools and childcare centers were forced to close, many Mothers of Color were pigeonholed into leaving their jobs to care for young children and adult dependents. This further contributed to the loss of the female workforce. Thus, during such a strenuous moment in history, Women of Color

⁹⁰ I use the word “Hispanic” here because that is the identifier used in the article.

overwhelmingly experienced job losses, earned lower wages, and assumed increased responsibilities as they juggled their own careers, their children's education, and unpaid, reproductive labor⁹¹ in the home.

In the early morning of March 13, 2020, the same day Trump declared a national state of emergency and California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Executive Order N-26-20, Breonna Taylor was murdered by the Louisville Police Department during the execution of a no-knock warrant. Two months later, on May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by Officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis when Chauvin pinned Floyd to the ground and held his knee to Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes. On May 26, a day after Floyd was killed, anti-Black racism protests broke out in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In response to the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other innocent Black Americans, protests quickly spread across the U.S. and across the world. The COVID-19 pandemic and national demonstrations against the unruly deaths of Black Americans shed light on the brutal manifestations of systemic racism and sparked a long overdue national dialogue about race, racism, and its intersectional oppressions. Indeed, the swift mobilization of thousands of people across the globe unveiled the deep-seated roots which upheld anti-Black racism in American and social systems worldwide.

In the Fall of 2020 several weeks following the height of the racial uprisings, California wildfires raged intensely while storms and hurricanes overtook the central and east coast of the U.S. The economic disasters devastating the United States further positioning 2020 as a historical year of extremes. Indeed, the convergence of the four pandemics—the COVID-19 health crisis,

⁹¹ As a reminder to the reader, reproductive labor is reproductive labor is work often associated with caregiving and domestic housework including but not limited to cleaning, cooking, child care, and the unpaid domestic labor force. Black and Chicana/Latina women's paid and unpaid work (productive and reproductive labor) emerge as important features of Black and Brown political economy (Collins, 2000; Caballero et al., 2017, 2019).

looming economic collapse, structural and systemic racism, and environmental catastrophe—enveloped Communities of Color (Ladson Billings, 2021). The world in its entirety, was engulfed in cascade of disasters and in dire need of healing.

The Impact of Four Pandemics on Women of Color

Women, Mothers, and Daughters of Color shouldered a great deal of front-line work during the four pandemics, and they carried entire communities forward with their feminized labor. Most vulnerable to burn out and in need of support were Motherscholars and Daughterscholars of Color. These academic women who had once struggled to tend to familial, academic, and professional needs, were now inundated with even greater pressure during such a critical historical moment. Responsibilities that were in many ways physically separate in their lives prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., workplace, school, and home) became coalesced and converged within the four walls of the home. Increased feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, coupled with the challenges of attending college remotely, paying tuition, juggling financial constraints, and staying healthy made an already vulnerable population even more susceptible to burnout and in need of the very care they so generously expended to others. Families of Color, like the Titus family, who had developed collaborative relationships with one another while they were going to college together saw drastic shifts in roles, priorities, and routines during the COVID crisis. As the Titus family describes in the following section, creating rooms for these changes to unfold, while keeping the peace in the home, was often easier said than done.

The “Good Mother” and “Good Daughter” Dilemma: Titus Family, 2018–2020

In the months leading up to 2020 and in a pre-pandemic world, Renee Titus, Alanis Titus, Sofia Titus, and Sofia’s husband (the girls’ father) were pursuing undergraduate degrees at

different institutions in California and Pennsylvania⁹². In the fall quarter immediately following her 2017 high school graduation, the eldest of the Titus children, Renee, began her college journey several thousand miles away from their Stockton home, at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. One year later, in the fall of 2018, Alanis applied and was granted admission to UCLA. Though they were attending different institutions, all Titus family members of college-going age (Sofia, her husband, Renee, and Alanis) were enrolled in an accredited four-year, degree granting university at a time that overlapped. With all four adults in college and a household filled with young children, the Titus family had their hands full, but Sofia endured what is arguably the greatest load of responsibility while her daughters were away at college.

The Sacrificial Mother

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic drastically impacted how Motherscholars navigated their complex lives and it added an extra layer of responsibility to Sofia's already packed schedule. But before the pandemic even began, parenting students struggled to maintain jobs, raise more than one child, and cope with other stressors, including assisting loved ones with remote learning (Anaya, 2011; Gutierrez et al., 2012). Juggling an array of competing responsibilities while learning from home were hallmarks of Sofia's collegiate journey. In fact, Sofia had spent the better half of her post-secondary career at San Joaquin Delta College and Pennsylvania State World Campus learning from college instructors who taught their courses virtually because she was enrolled in hybrid (online and in-person) programs of study. Sofia admitted that it was easier to learn course material when classes met in person but securing

⁹² Sofia already held an Associate's degree from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, but she and her husband made the decision to both enroll in and continue their college journey together at Delta College (Stockton, California). They took classes remotely and in person in preparation for their respective career goals. Within a few years' time, Sofia and her husband transferred to their respective university campuses en route to earn their Bachelor's degrees—Sofia at Pennsylvania State World Campus (Pennsylvania State University's online campus) and her husband at California State University.

childcare for her children so that she could physically make it to class on campus sometimes made this option an impossibility. The flexibility of remote learning allowed Sofia to stay home so that she could work from home and engage in the mothering of her children and husband.

To deal with the many challenges that came with learning from home, Sofia developed strategies to help her quiet the noise of happenings in her surroundings. For example, she drowned out the booming sounds coming from the living room television by playing soothing music in her earphones; and she maintained a keen focus on what was being projected on her computer screen even when her young children were running and playing around the house, as children often do. Thus, years before the COVID-19 pandemic began, Sofia had learned how to best study, how to most effectively take exams, and how to mother and scholar under these stringent academic constraints. These adaptive strategies became part of Sofia's academic toolkit, and they were especially helpful when her eldest daughters moved away to college.

The Fall of 2018 was especially challenging for the Titus family because it marked the year both Titus daughters moved out of the home to live on campus at their respective college campuses. With her eldest daughter, Renee in her second year of undergraduate study in Pennsylvania, and her second eldest daughter, Alanis, in her first year of college in Los Angeles, Sofia had a hard time (re)adjusting to life as a motherscholar without her daughters physically present with her. While her daughters were away, Sofia undertook a lot of reproductive labor alone as she cared for her four young children and husband. Sometimes, Sofia felt lonely because her greatest confidants and supporters, her daughters, were not longer physically with her and available to "vent about assignments and professors." Most importantly though, Sofia missed being near her daughters and was often concerned for their safety and wellbeing.

At the beginning of each academic term, Alanis and Renee found themselves understandably busy and did not communicate with their mother as much as Sofia would have liked. Sofia describes stretches of time when she did not speak on the phone or exchange text messages with her daughters because they hadn't reached out, nor did she want to, "bother them" while they were away. However, because Sofia and her daughters were connected with one another on social media sites like Instagram and they both had smart phones with video calling capabilities, the three Titus women were able to maintain a virtual connection, though they were living miles apart from one another. Sofia describes this practice:

I would look at [their social media feeds to see] what's going on like, "Oh, she's alive, that's good!" You know? "Oh, she went to get coffee. She's good]" . . . That was my way of just seeing like . . . I guess it's kind of like me peeking in the room, like, "Are you there? Ok, close the door." But I would mainly just kind of leave [them] alone.

Much like her mother, Renee missed her family back home in Stockton and had a hard time adjusting to life alone as one of very few "Latina 1st generation students of the lower class," on her historically white, predominantly upper-class, Catholic university in Pennsylvania. Because she felt homesick, Renee decided to distract herself from missing her community back home, so she filled her weekly schedule to the brim. In addition to taking classes, Renee participated in several extra-curricular activities, volunteered in the Pennsylvania community, and took on student worker positions. In her individual plática, Renee admitted,

I think I put my community [and family in Stockton] on the back burner, because it just got too hard to miss everybody and stuff, and it just got too hard to keep up with everything. So, I made myself feel better by diving into my studies and diving into my extracurriculars. I did those extra things, so I missed home less. And it worked. It did work. I started to have a lot more fun, and I was doing different things with friends, and I made friends. And I think I made myself fit into that college.

Indeed, this practice of disassociation helped Renee deal with the challenges of being away from home and it helped her develop a social network in Pennsylvania so that she did not feel so much

like an “outsider” on her own college campus. Sometimes, carving out time for extracurriculars and social activities meant that Renee had limited time left to devote to her family back in Stockton, but this practice “worked” and was essential for Renee’s persistence and retention at Seaton Hill.

For similar reasons, and because she was admitted to a strenuous academic program at UCLA, Alanis also found herself (though unintentionally) communicating with her mother less than Sofia would have like. At one point, when Alanis returned from UCLA for the holidays in late 2018 and early 2019, Sofia shared that she missed talking to her daughters and requested that they call or check in more. Alanis took this request to heart and made it a priority to call her mother on the phone more frequently when she returned to Los Angeles. These check-in calls were helpful for the women because they provided a space for each to vent about the challenges of going to school and caregiving. Ultimately, this Chicana/Latina daughterwork and motherwork practice allowed the women to continue to sustain maternal and daughteral bonds using virtual means during moments when they were physically apart from one another. However, once the COVID-pandemic hit in March of 2020, the Titus women would once again have to (re)learn how to nurture their relationship, while respecting personal boundaries.

Alanis Titus was in her second year of undergraduate study, and on the UCLA campus preparing for her final round of exams when Governor Newsom issued the Stay-at-Home order on March 13th, 2020. When Alanis heard about Newsom’s executive orders, she immediately booked a one-way bus ticket to Stockton to return home. Once she arrived, Alanis was welcomed by Sofia, Renee (who was newly graduated from Seton Hill University), her father, and her younger siblings and cousin. Alanis always enjoyed her trips back home when she visited in between academic terms because these breaks meant she had the opportunity to take a step back

from her schoolwork. However, her return home in March 2020 was different. She did not have the luxury of taking a break from her academics; she was studying for and taking her final examinations during the onset of a global health crisis and the convergence of three other pandemics.

Pursuing an undergraduate degree in Biochemistry at a highly selective, research level one institution like UCLA, is hard enough. But doing so as the second eldest daughter in a household of several adult and school-aged students attending primary, secondary, and post-secondary school virtually is even more challenging to do. From one day to the next, Alanis was forced to take on added domestic responsibilities which included, among other tasks, cleaning, cooking, and caring for younger siblings who were also learning to navigate virtual school. Because she was now living back at home, and the second eldest daughter, Alanis was pigeonholed into assuming a great portion of the reproductive labor Sofia had one done alone while Alanis and Renee were away at college.

Readers will recall from this chapter's opening epigraph, that Alanis expressed feeling frustrated, conflicted, "misunderstood & under supported because of the family's lack of adaptability as I work 2 jobs, try to continue extracurriculars, be a full-time student, and also [be] the supportive daughter you need all while navigating the pandemic." These feelings fermented for her prior to the onset of the COVID crisis, but they were exacerbated as daughterwork demands increased throughout the year 2020. Indeed, Alanis and Renee, like many eldest daughters across the globe, stepped up to the plate by prioritizing their family's wellbeing and sacrificing their own academic and professional responsibilities during the COVID-19 crisis because they had been socialized to extend this raced, gendered, and sacrificial labor early on in their lives.

The Sacrificial Daughter

In her research, Brinkman (2019) asserts that daughterhood and “Motherhood in Mexican/Chicana culture has long occupied a complex position in gender and familial dynamics, in large part due to how motherhood and womanhood are conflated as one—and the primary—dimension of a Mexicana/Chicana experience. [In short:] Good daughters become good mothers.” (p. 2). Patricia Hill Collins (1990) further states that Women of Color are often romanticized as mothers in their personification of “devotion, self-sacrifice, and unconditional love” (p. 116). Responding to the mythological concept of the “ideal mother,” Collins (2009) posits that such myths propagate archetypal gender roles and therefore aide in the internalization of a fictitious image of “good motherhood.” Indeed, Black and Brown Daughters working in close proximity to their mothers, receive a distinct type of mothering and raced and gendered socialization (Collins, 2004). They “learn to expect to work, to strive for an education so they can support themselves, and to anticipate carrying heavy responsibilities in their families and communities because these skills are essential to their own survival and those for whom they will eventually be responsible” (Collins, 2000, p. 183). With their words and through their actions, Black mothers socialize their daughters to extend labor and engage in care practices that position self-sacrifice, altruism, and community wellbeing as cornerstones for facilitating individual and community empowerment.

We see a similar pattern of mother-to-daughter raced and gendered socialization unfold in Brown communities. For example, in Chicana/Latina culture, the value of *marianismo*, modeled on the Catholic Virgin Madonna, similarly uplifts feminized behaviors of dependence, subordination, responsibility for domestic chores, and selfless devotion to family (Espinoza, 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Chicana/Latina mothers socialize their daughters into the

marianismo role beginning in early childhood, such that daughters are encouraged to adopt normative behaviors related to femininity, submission, and reservation. Ultimately, the *marianismo* complex creates an expectation that “good” Chicana/Latina women, and by extension, “good” Chicana/Latina daughters will always make sacrifices to prioritize family needs above her own individual needs (Espinoza, 2010). In the following section, as in the opening epigraph, we hear Alanis Titus affirming that upholding one’s status as a “good” and “sacrificial” Chicana daughter can be extractive and taxing on the body.

When the COVID shutdowns went into place, Alanis was pressured to assume the role of housekeeper, tutor, tech consultant, babysitter, and in many ways, othermother to her younger siblings. Engaging in this type of reproductive labor was not necessarily new for Alanis. Growing up, she and Renee often collaborated with their parents (who were both students at San Joaquin Delta College at the time) in maintaining the house upkeep and in rearing the young children of the family. However, providing the type and level of daughterwork she had once extended to her parents (and the othermotherwork she offered to her siblings) became challenging for Alanis to do in the Spring of 2020 because her responsibilities were compounded by her academic and professional workload. In a letter written to her mother in August 2020, Alanis highlighted some of the frustrations she felt as she struggled to readjust to life back home in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. She wrote:

I think in the past while you started to go back to school, even dad too, while I was in high school, I picked up a lot of responsibility in the house & was depended on [especially with] the baby. I understood how difficult it was for both of y’all & offered help [with] work & kids while [I was] in [high school]. And I think [with] COVID & being stuck together, I feel like I was unfairly leaned on and it still hasn’t been addressed. I think it’s easy for you & dad to write off the challenges & stresses I face as a STEM UCLA student because y’all believe you have the same experience & can understand but you don’t. The rigor & expectations are different.

In this written reflection, and in verbal conversations, Alanis also shared that she often endured the burden of assuming a greater share of responsibility in the home, when compared to the levels of responsibility her younger brothers were endowed with. Though Alanis frequently communicated to her parents that she believed stark inequities in the division of household labor permeated her life pre-COVID, she felt especially frustrated in the early months of the pandemic because she believed her parents provided no remedy to this inequity. Instead, she felt she was “was unfairly leaned on” and had to sacrifice her own academics while her mother and father “[wrote] off the stresses I face as a STEM UCLA student.” By offering to her family emotional, instrumental, and reproductive labor through her daughterwork, Alanis became the “good daughter,” but also the “sacrificial” daughter. For the Titus daughters, assuming the identity of a sacrificial daughter meant they labored tirelessly to foster their family’s emotional, health, academic, and spiritual wellbeing, though came at an emotional, psychological, or material cost to them.

Without a doubt, caring for the self and tending to others in the context of four pandemics was a challenge for all three Titus women. From their educational life narrative, we see how Motherscholars and Daughterscholars of Color are often left to singlehandedly cope with dire health, academic, and financial circumstances, but they turn to one another in the hopes of developing a collective plan of action to move the family unit forward. Sometimes these plans call on mothers to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their children and community; other times it is the daughters who undertake huge sacrifices. For Sofia, Renee, and Alanis Titus, attending college together during the convergence of four pandemics was both an overwhelming dilemma and a bittersweet endeavor. Throughout this experience, the Titus women, like the other mother-daughter pairs in this study collaborated while they were near and far from one another; they

reached academic milestones as a family unit; and they sacrificed as a collective. Over the course of their joint time in college (2018 and beyond), the Titus women taught one another how to be “good mothers” and “good daughters” while extending emotional and instrumental support during really challenging times. During this strenuous process, they also learned it was ok to falter, and get frustrated, and sometimes be a bit selfish, because that too is what “good mothers” and “good daughters” do.

Dissertating on the Borderlands: The Escobedo Family, 2020–2021

Several hundred miles away from Stockton, California, and about ten miles east of the Leyva household in the San Gabriel Valley, me (Cindy R. Escobedo), my mom, Cecilia R. Escobedo, and my younger sister, Abigail Escobedo, also struggled to navigate life as humans, caregivers, and students in a post-COVID world. My mother, a doctoral candidate in the field of Nursing Practice at the time, had just begun the data collection phase of research when the California Stay-at-Home Order went into effect in March 2020. Prior to the COVID-19 onset, Cecilia was en route to file her dissertation and one application away from participating in the Spring 2020 commencement ceremony. She was in the tail end of her doctoral program and had stringent academic deadlines to meet, but she was also a nurse whose already fast-paced, high-stakes, physically taxing workload became exacerbated when the COVID-19 pandemic befell the world. With mothering, dissertating, and working full time, Cecilia was exhausted on so many fronts. Unfortunately, in the summer of 2020, she and several other members of my extended family became COVID-sick. For two months, my mother was bedridden and physically unable to go to work and complete her course assignments. Thus, she had no choice, but to extend her time-to-degree and she made the decision not to participate in her institution’s graduation ceremony.

As the eldest daughter in a household of six, I felt it was my responsibility to undertake the raced and gendered labor of nursing my mother and entire family back to physical health. Though I was rounding out the data collection phase of my doctoral research and knee-deep in the trenches of analyzing the letters and pláticas that inform this very birthstory, I had to make difficult choices about prioritizing my family and their health and prioritizing my academics. Like my mother, I had hard academic deadlines to meet, but I chose to fulfill my daughteral responsibilities and I chose family. My co-advisors, Dr. Daniel G. Solórzano and Dr. David G. García, and my colleagues were so gracious to me during this time; they continually reminded me (over email and over Zoom) that family and my mental health were a priority and always worth the labor and energy investment. These reminders from colleagues who humanized the college-going process were critical to my persistence and retention in the doctoral program.

My younger sister, Abigail, also played an instrumental role in nurturing my family back to health throughout our joint motherscholar-daughterscholar era. While I cooked healthy meals for the household and meticulously sanitized our home, Abigail made us all laugh; she reminded us to appreciate the little things in life; she invited us to pray together; and she held space for everyone in the household to just exist. She also got my mom and I hooked on Caramel Lattes (my mother's preference) and Soy Chai Lattes (my absolute favorite) from the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf. Supporting us on our own journeys by bringing us warm beverages was my sister's way of bringing light to our home, during a really dark time. With her daughterwork, and sisterwork, Abigail livened the household and nourished us back to spiritual and mental health. She graciously did all of this while working from home and taking a full load of classes in preparation for her transfer out of the California community college and into the University of California. As was the case with students across the globe, distance learning affected the way

Abigail learned and performed academically. Home stressors, work stressors, and school stressors merged in insidious ways, and the convergence of these three significantly impacted her studies and mental health. Despite these setbacks though, Abigail modeled resilience and tenacity for my mother and me. Her spirit of loving kindness uplifted the entire household throughout the year 2020 and into 2021.

The year 2021 marks an indelible time in my educational family history. In March, my mother, Dr. Cecilia R. Escobedo, successfully filed her dissertation titled, *The Prevention of Foot Amputations in Mexican Americans* (Escobedo, 2021). In June, my sister graduated with her Associate Degree of Arts in Psychology for transfer to the University of California; and in September, Abigail began her journey at UC Santa Barbara. In between taking my sister to and from UCSB and maintaining the house upkeep while my mother was away at work, I filed this dissertation in December 2021.

Developing this study and writing this dissertation has been an especially introspective process because it has forced me to analyze life experiences that align very closely to my own, while I have had to personally traverse the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, and scholarhood. Throughout the research process, I learned that the Escobedo motherscholar-daughterscholar educational life history was wrought with sacrifices and contradictions, but this same journey afforded us an opportunity to collaborate with one another in ways we would have never imagined. As I analyzed the data and wrote out the portraits presented in this study, I learned that the de Uriarte, Abraham, Leyva, Valencia, Nino, Chipi, R. Peña-Luqin, Titus, and Escobedo educational life journeys have come to mirror one another in many ways. With our motherwork, daughterwork, and sisterwork⁹³, we developed and imparted Chicana/Latina

⁹³I operationalized Chicana/Latina sisterwork as gendered care work which includes the care sisters do in the home, classroom, communities, and with themselves. I argue that sisterwork is both intergenerational

motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies on the borderlands and we calcified an intergenerational legacy of maternal and daughteral educational resilience.

Patricia Hill Collins (1990, 1994) reminds us, for *Women of Color*, mothering and motherwork embody the intergenerational practice of caring for and raising women and children across cultural and generational lines. Building on Hill Collins's maternal paradigm of care, I assert, for *Daughters of Color*, daughtering embodies the intergenerational practice of affirming and nurturing the humanity of mothers, maternal figures, sisters, children, and community. When daughterscholars care for their mothers, and nurture their families and communities to emotional, spiritual, physical, and academic health, they engage in a particular type of raced and feminized carework, their daughterwork. Through their daughterwork, daughters affirm their matrilineages while maintaining literal and figurative ties to cultural and feminized genealogies of community healing. With their daughterwork, daughters preserve the spirit, life, and visions of their mother and foremothers. Though agentic and autonomous beings in their own right, the daughterscholars and motherscholars become physical, spiritual, and cultural extensions of one another.

Motherscholars and Daughterscholars Navigating the Borderlands

As is recorded in their written letters, and orated during their individual and group pláticas, the Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars faced the dilemma of constantly shifting in and out of different social contexts (home, the academe, work) and crossing various borderlands (motherhood, daughterhood, scholarhood, and womanhood) on their higher education pathways. Within these contested nepantla spaces, my collaborators

and expansive because it encompasses the histories, practices, and rituals learned and from an enacted by other sisters, *primas*, *tias*, mothers, *abuelas*, and other femmes in the community.

learned how to reconcile their fragmented identities. In *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa (2012) theorizes the Nahuatl concept, *nepantla*, reclaiming it as transformative tool that names the liminal space where Chicanas/Latinas call into question old beliefs systems and grapple with ideological shifts. As they occupy and move through literal and metaphorical borderlands, Chicanas/Latinas develop a consciousness of the borderlands; what Anzaldúa calls a mestiza consciousness. She states, the mestiza, the women of the Borderlands, copes with living in the borderlands “by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity . . . She learns to juggle cultures.” (Anzaldúa, 2012, p. 101). I assert: the motherscholars and daughterscholars in this study are nepantleras and mestiza scholars. They contend with the “conflict and tension generated by the polarities experienced when one is torn between the needs of the home or ethnic culture and the demands of the Anglo world such as that which resides within educational institutions” (Espinoza, 2010, p. 321). Indeed, they develop, “a pluralistic personality” while confronting the dilemma of juggling between dichotomous roles of being students, mothers, daughters, and sisters, simultaneously.

By leveraging their motherwork and daughterwork, however, they prioritize family, nurture community, and become formally educated on their higher education pathways. Moreover, by questioning longstanding cultural beliefs about what constitutes a “good daughter” (Espinoza, 2010) and “good mother” (Anaya, 2011), they “sustain contradictions, [and turn] the ambivalence into something else,” something more aligned with their lived realities. Thus, the motherscholars-daughterscholar teams stand as symbol of power, survival, and intergenerational rebirthing across time and space. As we have seen in this chapter, and in those proceeding, the women in this research leveraged their carework to help facilitate their individual and collective academic wellbeing on their higher education pathways. These raced and gendered carework

practices served as the foundation for the development of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies.

Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Pedagogies

I adapt Villenas & Moreno's (2001) definition of mother-daughter pedagogies to position Chicana/Latina motherscholars-daughter pedagogies as, embodied, improvised, and contested teaching and learning processes that occur between motherscholars and daughterscholars through the imparting and exchange of consejos, cuentos, la experiencia, motherwork, and daughterwork. I contend, Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies similarly involve the dilemma of teaching daughterscholars and motherscholars, "to fit into systems of oppression so as to ensure their survival, and, on the other hand, to teach them not to become 'willing participants in their own subordination'" (Collins, 1991, p. 123). The women in this study developed and activated motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies by watching each other, and then mimicking each other, with adjustments. Karla describes this reciprocal mother-daughter pedagogical process perfectly when she said:

I think mothers, they reflect themselves onto their daughters . . . It's almost like a two-way mirror, but that mirror is from the circus that is distorted in different ways, but it's still the same image, you know what I'm saying? [I think my mom tries to imitate me] . . . Even echoing on what she had said, like I'm following your footsteps in a way. I was like, whoa, but I'm following your footsteps, are we going around in a circle?

As Karla notes, motherscholars and daughterscholars engage in these pedagogical exchanges by imparting messages and practices that present in the form of motherwork and daughterwork. By teaching one another how to navigate the worlds of academia, motherhood, and daughterhood with their raced and gendered carework, the women develop motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies. In so doing, they nurture their individual and collective physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic wellbeing. Thus, Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies served as retention and persistence tools that supported maternal and daughteral

movement through higher education systems across time and space. Framing Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies as tools that led my collaborators to become *bien educadas* bring me to acknowledge that Mothers and Daughters of Color are the cornerstones of educational advancement for Chicana/Latina women. Indeed, these practices honor and uphold the matrilineage.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the personal and academic dilemma my collaborators experienced straddling cultural borderlands during the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years (2010s–2020s). I explained, during their joint time in college, the women felt the pressures and dilemmas of fulfilling multiple, and often competing roles related to normative raced and gendered socialization practices which they learned from family and community members growing up. The women faced the dilemma of maintaining their status of good mothers, good daughters, *and* good students but cultural expectations in each domain made this a challenging feat to accomplish. The women were unable and unwilling to stratify these overlapping identities because as mestiza scholars, they occupied contested spaces that “come together and overlap... borderlands between cultural sensibilities and ethnicities... between generations... between meanings of ‘womanhood’” (Villenas 2006, p. 147). They reconciled these competing expectations and supported one another during their joint college experience with their motherwork and daughterwork.

The motherscholars graciously accepted the personal, professional, and academic sacrifices that came with their experiences mothering across geographies and cultural spaces. With their motherwork, they nurtured their daughters to mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, and academic health. The daughters similarly leveraged their daughterwork to support their mothers

on their higher education trajectories. Thus, Chicana daughterwork encompasses the care work that daughters do in the home, in the classroom, in the community, and with themselves. It presents as a raced and gendered form of instrumental and emotional support. By extending this form of raced and gendered carework to their mothers, the daughters assumed positions as peers and academic doulas and consequently disrupted traditional, hierarchical parent-child dynamics. Though their daughterwork helped to facilitate their mother's progression through college, the daughters felt extending this labor was taxing on the body, mind, and spirit.

Ultimately, the motherscholars and daughterscholars learned how to maneuver their carework as they facilitated their individual and joint movement through higher education. Thus, Chicana motherwork and daughterwork are critical care practices foundational to the development of Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies. By cultivating and drawing on these pedagogies, my collaborators calcified an intergenerational legacy of Chicana/Latina maternal and daughteral academic success. Thus, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars learned and taught one another how to be “good mothers,” “good daughters,” and “good scholars” in the everyday. Now that I have brought to light Chicana's/Latina's everyday experiences and practices of raced, gendered, and classed teaching, learning, and communal knowing over a 50-year time span over the course of four chapters, I bring the Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory to a close. In the next chapter, I provide offer implications and recommendations for practice, policy, and research.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY, AND RESEARCH

[We, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars, ask educational stakeholders] to allow us space to be all parts of ourselves. To not just be the student. To not just be the brain. We're not walking brains; we have a whole system. We have our spirit, our emotional well-being, our psychological, our physical [wellbeing]. [We ask them] to check-in, to put it in the syllabus, [create] a wellness policy, or something where professors [and other stakeholders] have a [greater] consciousness of the well-being of [all their] students.

(Cindy Luquin, Daughterscholar to Erika R. Peña)

This dissertation examined the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college from 1972-2021. In preceding chapters, we heard from 22 motherscholar and daughterscholar collaborators who shared with us how they leveraged their carework to individually and collectively overcome challenges that impeded college access and retention. In the Prologue, we also learned that my decision to center Chicanas/Latinas, and my commitment to advocate for the educational mobility of Students of Color with Dependents stems from an interest in making meaning of my personal journey as a Chicana daughterscholar who has pursued higher education alongside her mother. Recollections of my mother's (re)commitment to pursue post-secondary schooling as a Chicana Student with Dependents, and at a time that converged with my own college journey has led me to use my research as a platform from which to propose tangible changes to support Families and Students of Color at the policy level, in the practice realm, and in the scholarly world. Though my research collaborators and I recognize that institutions of higher learning and tangential educational structures were never created with Families of Color in mind (Yosso, 2006), we believe they have the capacity to promote a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges they endure throughout their college process. Indeed, the opening epigraph

affirms that we, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars, believe educational stakeholders (i.e., administrators, student affairs practitioners, faculty, policy makers, researchers, and families) who frequent these spaces have the power to leverage resources to increase access and retention opportunities for Families of Color across generations.

Without a doubt, educational stakeholders want to see all students and their families thrive, but fragmented approaches that address the needs of students without a consideration for their individual and familial wellbeing often minimize chances at educational success for the entire family unit. To truly equitize educational opportunities for all students, it is imperative that educational stakeholders adopt a multi-generational approach. A multi-generational approach positions young and adult children, parents, and extended family as vital stakeholders for academic advancement. Demonstrating their commitment to students and their families means stakeholders enact policies, practices, and research endeavors that bolster post-secondary degree acquisition across familial generations. Thus, with a multi-generational and praxis-oriented paradigm in mind, I begin to bring this dissertation to a close by offering recommendations for developing programming, policies, practice⁹⁴, and research centered around the needs of Families and Students of Color with Dependents.

Implications and Recommendations for Institutional Programming and Policy

Higher education institutions can play critical roles in supporting students historically marginalized on college and university campuses—including students with dependents—by designing institutional programming and policy in the following areas: (a) Centralizing In-Person

⁹⁴ The majority of practice and policy recommendations I make in this chapter are for consideration in a California context, but they can be adjusted depending on the local or state context.

and Online Resources, (b) Food and Housing Insecurity, (c) Health, Wellness, and Childcare, and (d) Expanding and Combining Funding Streams.

Centralizing In Person and Online Resources

One way to support Students with Dependents is to create physical spaces, such as family centers, on campus for them convene and learn about on- and off-campus resources. These centers should include at least one dedicated, full-time staff member (e.g., a Student Parent Advocate or Student Parent Specialist position) who is tasked with providing guidance and service referrals. In collaboration with cross-campus partners, the full-time staff member can develop programming centered on the needs of parenting students (e.g., parenting support groups and summer bridge programs). The full-time staff member can also lead efforts in creating the infrastructure to provide students with one-on-one support tailored in the areas of parenting student rights, developing, and implementing birth plans, and developing and implementing familial academic success plans. This center should also house staff who can support parenting students' applications to CalFresh, CalWORKs and Medi-Cal. To support students on campus late in the evening, this center should also offer extended evening hours.

To reach those students who may be physically away from the campus but who are still interested in learning more about resources available to them, institutions could create comprehensive websites that centralize information related to food, housing, and the availability of childcare and lactation spaces on campus. Institutions committed to undertaking this endeavor might model their website after the University of California at Santa Cruz's (UCSC) student parent website⁹⁵. Centralized resources of this nature can allow Students with Dependents to

⁹⁵ The Students as Parents Website offers resources compiled by students who are parents working in conjunction with campus programs that support undergraduate and graduate students who are raising

access much-needed resources, while eliminating the need for them to add tasks related to contacting school personnel—whether in person, over the phone, or virtually—to their already demanding schedules.

Addressing Basic Needs

As we heard throughout this dissertation, Students with Dependents face unique circumstances in meeting basic needs. Unlike their peers who do not have dependents, they have additional family-related expenses such housing, additional food, childcare, and dependent healthcare. In the next section, I offer specific recommendations for addressing these need areas.

Addressing Housing Insecurity

To address housing insecurity, institutions should lead efforts in expanding affordable student family housing. One way to do this is by basing housing affordability on students' budgets, rather than on market rates so that students pay no more than the federal standard of their income in rent. Institutions should also prioritize Students with Dependents and their families when organizing housing assignments. Together, these practices can help relieve some of the stresses related to housing insecurity for Students with Dependents.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Colleges and universities might also institutionalize low-cost or subsidized student meal programs to address food insecurity. For example, at UC Santa Cruz, the Services for Transfer and Re-Entry Students (STARS) program collaborated with Dining Services to launch a pilot Student Parent Meal Plan (Student Parents, n.d.; UC Parent Students Workgroup, 2020). This plan provides parenting students with a fixed number of meals at the dining hall for themselves

children at UC Santa Cruz.” The website can be found at <https://studentsuccess.ucsc.edu/students-as-parents/index.html>

and their families, at no cost. With campus partners, the Blum Center and the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, STARS has been actively maintaining a funding stream for this program and is currently pursuing a Student Fee Fund and other funding to support the program's continuation (Student Parents, n.d.; UC Parent Students Workgroup, 2020). Program participants include UC Santa Cruz matriculated students with dependents who live on or off campus. When California implemented its COVID-19 shelter-in-place provisions, UC Santa Cruz reimaged the meal plan program to accommodate the different situations in which parenting students found themselves. Institutionalizing programs like the UCSC STAR Student Meal Program at colleges and universities across the U.S. could make a world of a difference for students with dependents and their families.

Addressing Childcare

Students with dependents are often met with unaffordable and inaccessible childcare options. While campus faculty, staff and students with dependents have access to early childcare both on- and off-campus, spots are limited. While these child-care opportunities are available to students with children, they are not available to students who are responsible for young dependents who are not necessarily birth children (i.e., siblings, cousins, etc.) Having access to adequate and cost-effective childcare resources is a challenge for this student populations as well. To ameliorate these challenges, I recommend that institutions increase their childcare capacities, so the populations listed above have access to childcare. I also recommend institutions work with the California Department of Education to subsidize childcare for undergraduate and graduate Students with Dependents.

Addressing Accommodations for Pregnant and Nursing Mothers

Though legal protections exist to ensure the contrary, pregnant and nursing Motherscholars in California often face limited access to private, secure, and clean lactation rooms where they can express breast milk and/or breastfeed an infant child. For example, California labor laws (2003) require that employers provide a nearby private space and reasonable amount of break time to accommodate nursing mothers. Moreover, Senate Bill 142 requires that employers provide a lactation room or location near the employee's workspace where the employee can express and store breast milk in private. To compliment these mandate, California Education Code 222 requires that educational facilities provide reasonable accommodations to lactating pupils on a school campus (Cal. Education Code 222). Legislation passed in more recent years have instituted further protections for pregnant and nursing mothers enrolled specifically at public, California colleges and universities. For example, effective January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 2785 requires the California Community Colleges and the California State University (and encourages the University of California) to provide reasonable accommodations on their campuses for a lactating student to express breast milk, breastfeed an infant child, and/or address other needs related to breastfeeding. Under the AB 2785 reasonable requests clause, designated rooms should not be restrooms and must have a comfortable place to sit and include a table or shelf to place a breast pump and any other equipment to express breast milk. Though California Assembly Bill 2785 Senate Bill 142, and California Education Code 222 clearly delineate educational institutions are to provide accommodations for breastfeeding mothers, these resources are sparce.

To remain in compliance with state of California breastfeeding laws, educational stakeholders across institutions and departments should reevaluate their pregnant and nursing

mother accommodations priorities by identifying at minimum, one employee, department, or office on each campus as the responsible party for maintaining the cleanliness and supply inventory of all lactation rooms on a regular schedule. Because many Students with Dependents are also employees across institutions, these mandates extend to them as well. Therefore, support staff at the departmental level should also contribute to this effort. Institutions should also begin constructing new lactation spaces which are equipped with access to a power source for a breast pump or any other equipment to express breast milk. These lactation accommodations must be available whenever students are required to be present on campus, therefore responsible parties should prepare for making these spaces available throughout the day and into the evening during class hours (Caballero et al., 2019; Vega, 2019).

Implications and Recommendations for Instructors and Classroom Practice

Given that they interact most closely with students and are in many ways the primary point of contact for Students with Dependents, faculty and instructional support staff can also contribute to efforts directed at facilitating intergenerational academic success. To set a tone of inclusion and equity, instructors can communicate expectations about Students with Dependents throughout the term. They can, for example, state their commitment to Students with Dependents by including a clause in the course syllabus that specifically addresses this population. In this clause, faculty might encourage students to bring children to class when there are no other alternatives and be open to providing flexible options for holding office hours and for submitting assignments. Instructors might also work alongside pregnant students to develop birth plans which provide clarity about how both parties will handle projects and coursework in the final months of pregnancy and post-birth (Vega, 2019).

Faculty might also take a multiple measures approach when crafting course assignments. In practice, that might mean instructors move away from a “Midterm & Final” framework.⁹⁶ Under a multiple measures approach, faculty might ask students to submit smaller assignments to demonstrate their understanding of course material. These smaller assignments could build on one another and form part of a culminating project that is to be submitted at the end of the academic term. This holistic assessment process can equitize academic opportunities for all students, including Students with Dependents. Moreover, it can lead to greater retention of course materials (Keus et al., 2019). Finally, when designing their courses and considering assignment submission expectations, faculty should include printer friendly text options for those working from home and for those students with limited financial resources to invest in printing toner and paper.

Combining Funding Streams

This research revealed that Motherscholars, Daughterscholars, and other Students with Dependents face financial insecurities and could benefit from receiving increased financial support. Presently, undergraduate, and graduate students (regardless of dependency status) can submit requests to increase their aid with documentation that supports their request (e.g., childcare and in-home services expenses for adult dependents, medical expenses for young and adult children, medical expenses for adult dependents under their care, etc.). Theoretically, this means that Students with Dependents can apply to receive a larger cost of attendance allowance. However, Gaby Abraham and Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte remind us these efforts are often

⁹⁶ A “Midterm and Finals” framework positions these two assignments as constituting significant (and sometimes exclusive) assessment components (Keus et al., 2019).

met with resistance and Students with Dependents are often forced to take out loans when requests are not granted.

Debt can become further compounded for student parents who are expected to fund not only their own education, but also that of their college-aged children. When Parent PLUS loans are the only funding options available for Students with Dependents to offset the cost of their children' schooling, college becomes inaccessible for two generations: that of the parent who is trying to pursue their own education, and that of the child eager to earn a college degree. I recommend that federal and state funding agencies reevaluate parameters around funding the post-secondary education of families by making appropriate revisions to existing funding formulas. These institutions can, for example, include a question on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which identifies parenting students with minor dependents and students with dependents with adult dependents. Indeed, this is a timely, yet time-consuming effort which can take several years to implement. To expedite this timeline and ameliorate some of these funding road blocks, institutions can combine state and federal funding for students with dependents by supplementing governmental funding with institutional support (such as by providing awards and grants). This level of support should be extended to all undergraduate and graduate Students with Dependents. Institutions should also designate funding pools specifically to cover the cost of fees and tuition for Students with Dependents; this funding could come in the form of endowed scholarships.

Institutions might also designate funding support for faculty and student who pursue research and teaching efforts that focus on improving educational conditions for Students with Dependents. Support in the form of research fellowships and travel grants would be especially integral for helping materialize this goal. Research Fellows and campus partners who are

identified as part of this effort could form part of a campus-wide and/or department-wide Students with Dependents Taskforce. To gauge a more nuanced understanding about the demographic of students providing for dependents, this Task Force can lead scholarly and practical efforts in further identifying and implementing recommendations to meet the personal, familial, academic, and professional needs of Students with Dependents. This Taskforce can, for example, produce and administer assessments that qualitatively and quantitatively measure parenting students' needs at the institutional and departmental levels. Research findings emergent from these endeavors can be used to inform the construction and implementation of policies and procedures at the institutional level, and beyond. Now that I have outlined some of the policy and practice recommendations emergent from study findings, I transition to identify implications for research and highlight proposed areas for scholarly expansion.

Implications for Research and Proposed Areas of Expansion

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this research, I foresee areas for expansion transgressing empirical, conceptual, and methodological lines. I also believe this line of inquiry can cut across the fields of Chicana/o and Ethnic Studies, Education, Gender Studies, Sociology, as well as History, Geography, and Legal Studies. In the following sections, I encourage scholars to carry out research that investigate structures and practices of racial, gender, and class inequity which reverberate in questions about educational access, opportunity, and persistence for student populations historically disenfranchised in the U.S. Specifically, I call for expansion in the areas of: (a) mother-daughter and family-oriented research, (b) critical methodologies, and (c) cross-disciplinary studies including those which take a historical and geographical approach. I position studies that pursue these research areas as pieces of revisionist scholarship which contribute to the recovery and preservation of Family of Color community memory (Alonso 2015; Delgado

Bernal, 1998; Mares-Tamayo, 2014; Rocha et al., 2016). I believe, in this historical recovery process, scholars can foster a space for new stories, new frameworks, and new methodologies to take form (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002).

Implications for Mother-Daughter and Family-Centered Research

At large, this research nuances discourses concerning Daughterwork, Motherwork (Collins, 1994), and Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies (Villenas & Moreno, 2001). It also contributes to a growing archive of Women of Color educational success narrative across family generations, college generations, and demographic groups. For example, this research furthers our understanding of Women of Color daughtering and daughterhood by building on the work of Patricia Hill Collins (1994, 2009) and the Chicana Motherwork Collective (Caballero et al., 2017 & 2019) who theorize Black and Brown mothering and motherhood. Specifically, it extends the scholarship on Chicana/Latina carework to include motherwork and daughterwork, or the work that daughters do to benefit family and community, across generations. As we heard in Chapter Seven, daughters and sisters often collaborated with one another to nurture their mother's wellbeing, but also their own wellbeing and that of their loved ones. In the dissertation, I referred to this raced and gendered care practice as daughterwork and sisterwork, but it is still an area vastly undertheorized. Further research is warranted in the areas of Women of Color daughterwork, sisterwork, and sisterhood to better understand the nuances in Women of Color carework.

Throughout the dissertation, I also presented findings which affirm that mujer-oriented knowledges like *consejos*, *la experiencia*, *educación*, and *y cuentos* are foundational to motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies. The opportunity to approach this study through a motherscholar-daughterscholar individual and group (e.g. one mother and two daughters)

perspective also unveiled new dimensions of Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pedagogies (Villenas & Moreno, 2001; Flores, 2016) that include relationships among mothers, daughters, sisters, and other femmes.

Moreover, in addition to extending the existing scholarship on Maternal Microaggressions (Vega, 2019), this research pushes us to consider what daughteral microaggressions might look like and how mothers and daughters respond to instances of aggression with their microaffirmative (Solórzano & Perez Huber, 2020; Vega, 2019) care work. My research collaborators showed us that their daughterwork and motherwork serves a microaffirmative function. Still, more research is warranted to better understand how Mothers and Daughters of Color leverage their carework to serve as everyday strategies of affirmation and validation in response to maternal (Vega, 2019) and daughteral microaggressions.

In my forthcoming scholarship, I intend to further nuance our relational (Molina, 2013) understanding of mother-daughter educational histories across geographies and time periods. For example, I look forward to expanding my research pool to include more Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar voices, while augmenting those narratives with the perspectives of African American, Indigenous, and Asian American motherscholar-daughterscholar pairs (among other racial/ethnic groups). As is noted in Chapter One, this dissertation has also led me to identify several online news articles which highlight the joint graduations of women of African American descent across the nation. In African American and Indigenous traditions, undertaking scholarship which centers maternal and daughteral lineages is a common practice (Caballero et al., 2017; Cisneros, 2018; Collins, 2005; hooks, 2000a, 2000b; Moraga, 2019; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). I seek to build on this tradition by uncovering and documenting

these maternal and daughteral stories of intergenerational academic success across locales and time periods.

For example, this research led me to identify, African American journalist, activist, and researcher, Ida B. Wells and her mother, Elizabeth “Izzy Bell” Warrenton, as the earliest example, to my knowledge, of the first African American motherscholar-daughterscholar pair. Both women attended what is now Rust College (previously known as Shaw University) in Mississippi in the late 1870s (Bay, 2009). Identifying Motherscholars and Daughterscholars of Colo and locating historical evidence of these pairs is but the first step in the honoring their education legacies. Moving forward with locating and examining primary sources is the next step for crafting a more nuanced narrative of mother-daughter experiences across racial and ethnic lines. Indeed, the historical and contemporary evidence of Women of Color mother-daughter success my research has unveiled highlights the complexities and timeliness of this area of study.

Beyond the Mother-Daughter Relationship

This dissertation situates the mother-daughter experience as the primary point of analysis, but other relationships blossomed alongside the focal relationships. These include relationships amongst siblings, cousins, grandparents, other children, and persons who may be considered family but are not necessarily blood related. Future studies might consider how the community around and of the women was impacted by the joint mother-daughter relationship. Some of these include tangential mother-son, father-daughter, father-son, othermother-otherdaughter, sister-sister, sister-brother, and brother-brother connections.

Moving Along the Educational Pipeline to Center Faculty with Dependents

This dissertation focused on examining the student experiences of motherscholars and daughterscholars. However, it is foreseeable that these women, and other students like them, will

continue to move on through the educational pipeline and transition into academic positions as faculty and administrators. At present, scarce research exists which explores the professional and life experiences of Faculty of Color with Dependents. Therefore, limited is our knowledge about how these intellectuals and professionals navigate home and work at large, but especially in a post-COVID context. Carrying out research studies that offer sound policy and institutional recommendations designed particularly for Faculty of Color with Dependents in mind is a much needed and timely pursuit.

Implications for Critical Qualitative Methods and Methodology

This research calls into question traditional notions of objectivity, data collection, and analysis by incorporating critical qualitative methodologies. Central to my reimagination and transformation of research approaches designed for, and by Women of Color is my intentional use of pláticas (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) and my development of the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology. These methodological approaches allowed me to (re)center the Chicana/Latina voice as I crafted scholarship that honors Women of Color ways of knowing and being. My intentional use of these raced and gendered methodologies afforded me the tools to exemplify accountability and engage in a deeper scholarly understanding of the complexities of Family of Color experiences.

Pláticas

Researchers across disciplines are called to continue developing the methodology of Chicana/Latina feminista pláticas by offering empirical and conceptual examples of varied approaches to using pláticas as a method and methodology in its numerous iterations (i.e., walking pláticas and virtual pláticas). Researchers are also called to offer empirical and conceptual examples of how pláticas are used conjunction with other methodologies like

testimonios (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012, 2016; Pérez Huber, 2009) and muxerista portraiture (Flores, 2016, 2017). In my research, I position plática spaces as ones where teaching and learning transgress in the everyday. That is the mothers and daughters learned how to be “good mothers” and “good daughters” as they dialogued with one another in the joint plática setting. Therefore, I urge researchers to further inquire how pláticas can be used as pedagogical tools. Further research about the conceptual and empirical application pláticas is warranted given our existing understanding of the process of preparing for, engaging in, and reflecting on employing pláticas as methodology.

Epistolary and Creative Writing Methodologies

This study also challenged traditional forms of qualitative research by drawing on the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology (CRFEM). I positioned the CRFEM as a tool that empowers research collaborators to write themselves and their experiences into existence. However, given that this methodological approach is still underutilized in the field of Education, there exist areas for growth. Future studies might consider integrating multimodal forms of creative and epistolary writing in their research methodology as a strategy for challenging traditional qualitative research practices.

In this study, I asked the mothers and daughters to write to each other, but they did not engage in a written correspondence with one another beyond having a verbal conversation about the last letter they wrote and offering a reflection on the letter writing process. Future studies might incorporate into an epistolary-style methodology didactic writing correspondence opportunities which take place between researchers and collaborators, between the cohort of research collaborators, and between family members, to name a few. A correspondence approach to epistolary-based methodologies might warrant greater and more intricate details about the

phenomena of interest. I argue, these methodologies move the Chicana Feminist and Critical Race cannons forward.

Implications for Historical and Archival Research

The field of education continues to reproduce Eurocentric epistemological perspectives which assumes there is only one way of knowing and interpreting reality. This has made it such that Women of Color histories of educational resilience have long been distorted and omitted in the field of education (Collins, 2000; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). This dissertation challenges such historical distortions by documenting a maternal and daughteral phenomena that spans geographies and time periods, but I still see areas for potential examination. For example, this study is centered in California, but Texas and Arizona are also geographies of opportunities where motherscholar-daughterscholar relationship are prolific. As we heard in the birthstory, the motherscholars and daughterscholars occupied literal and metaphorical spaces that spanned the Americas (i.e., Perú, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, the U.S. Southwest and East Coasts, etc.) Their movement through various geographies and time periods underscores the importance of drawing on research methodologies with roots in geography and history including but not limited to cartographies, oral histories, and archival work.

Building a Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Archive

Research findings with historical considerations emergent from this study and from those I am in the process of undertaking have led me to begin curating a community archive that documents Women of Color motherscholar-daughterscholar histories of educational resilience. Included in my developing revisionist archive are news articles, photographs, zines, stickers, epistolary and creative writings, and oral educational accounts which provide evidence of

Women of Color motherscholar-daughterscholar resilience in the United States, from the late 1800s to the present day. Of particular importance have been the pláticas and epistolary writings. Much like pláticas, I understand creative and epistolary writings as primary documents and historical artifacts that provide details about the private and intimate parts of the letter writer's life. I believe that my efforts to document Chicana/Latina narratives of educational resilience are evidence of my commitment to construct and preserve an archive that uplifts Women of Color intergenerational knowledge and community memory. The handwritten letters are in fact evidence of Women of Color resilience and resistance. As such, I believe that researchers who conduct archival research could benefit from including in the design of their research the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology and pláticas because they two methodologies carry with them an archival, historical, and revisionist impetus (Escobedo & Camargo Gonzalez, under review).

Over the course of this study, my research collaborators have graciously donated artifacts and documents from their personal and family collections to help me construct this Women of Color motherscholar-daughterscholar archive. I have also included in this developing archive personal documents and unpublished writings from my own family collection because I am interested in nurturing my cultural intuition throughout the entire process. Ultimately, my commitments to engage holistic and revisionist scholarship have moved me to enact a praxis that has transformed and reimagined the research process for me and my collaborators.

Conclusion

As is evident in Cindy Luquin's reflections in the opening epigraph, in designing this study, I was very intentional about weaving in opportunities for my collaborators to propose meaningful policy, practice, and research recommendations which can yield positive social,

educational, and financial returns across familial generations. When prompted to offer recommendations in these areas, my collaborators were very detailed in their responses and similarly acknowledged that institutional and cultural shifts can take form when educational stakeholders enact policy and practice changes designed with Women and Families of Color in mind. Many of the challenges that Students with Dependents endure throughout their college journeys can be ameliorated by implementing the recommendations that come from this research. Indeed, this study focused on the educational experiences of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters (a vast majority of) whom attended college in California, yet the needs of this distinct student population align with students who represent other racial and ethnic, low-income, veteran, and international communities. Therefore, I urge practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to make relevant changes in the immediate, and make institutional commitments in the long-term to support these students. My collaborators and I acknowledge that implementing these changes will necessitate financial and institutional commitments. Yes, colleges and universities across the nation are operating within the context of long-standing fiscal constraints, as well as more recent constraints related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the challenges that Students with Dependents face existed prior to and will persist beyond this critical time period. As such, I encourage educational stakeholders to accept the low- and no-cost recommendations in the short term while working toward the more resource-intensive recommendations' implementation in the long run. At this point, I conclude this chapter and transition to the Epilogue: A Love Letter to my Research Collaborators. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I summarize my research findings and offer an overview of this study in a love-letter format.

CHAPTER NINE: EPILOGUE: A LOVE LETTER TO MY RESEARCH COLLABORATORS

Ma, I wish I knew the histories of the women in our family before you. I bet that would be quite a story. But that may be just as well because I can say that you started something. Maybe you feel ambivalent or doubtful about it, but you did it. Actually, you should be proud of what you've begun. I am.

(Woo, 1981, p. 144)

Dear Mamás y Hijas,

Greetings, I am sitting on the lawn of a university campus in Santa Barbara, California as I craft this letter. The afternoon breeze is chilly (a stark contrast to the warm Los Angeles weather many of us are used to), but a fire pit is burning warmly beside me. This spot is serene; I can hear the birds chirping in the distance and I can smell a tinge of salt water in the air. I chose this specific location from which to write to you because the ambiance reminds me of that which engulfed the space where I facilitated the first set of pláticas, with my tocaya⁹⁷ and fellow scholar-sister, Cindy Luquin. On July 5, 2019, mere months before the COVID-19 shutdowns, Cindy, Erika, and I met at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in Pasadena, California. In the Palm Garden, we wrote letters; and sitting in the Jungle Garden lawn, we embraced one another while having very honest conversations about love, loss, and hope. I have returned to the Huntington Library time and time again throughout my doctoral journey to sit with—and make sense of—our educational life histories while drafting the chapters of this dissertation. Returning to a space we once shared has made me feel as though I have been able to nurture a spiritual relationship with you, in our physical absence from one another. For far too long, we have been separated because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the life challenges that have come with navigating a crisis of such epic proportion. I, like many of you, have struggled to

⁹⁷ Tocaya translates to namesake.

uphold personal and professional relationships that once flourished in a pre-COVID world. I long to be (re)connected with you as I conclude this study, so it only makes sense for me to return to nature, and to the gardens of Southern California to offer this final reflection.

I am intentional about writing to you in a letter format because engaging in a praxis of letter writing brought methodological and conceptual clarity to this research. It granted us the opportunity to learn about very intimate parts of our lives, including the parts that were sometimes too sacred, or too profane for us to speak on because verbalizing these feelings at times triggered emotional anguish and turmoil (Escobedo & Camargo Gonzalez, under review). The letter writing practice also afforded us opportunities to communicate convoluted and sometimes complex ideas in ways that were digestible for us. I understand that academic research is often inaccessible to people and communities who find themselves outside of academic circles. But I attempt to counter this exclusionary practice in my research at large, and in this chapter in specific. I am particularly thinking about how to reach your family and loved ones here. Some of your loved ones might still be curious about what your participation in this study looked like and what came of our engagement with one another. I feel so indebted to you and your families because you all generously took time out of your busy lives to share space with me. I would like for them to also hear about what came of the story we crafted together. Thus, in the spirit of reciprocity, I am sharing what I believe is an accessible overview of this research project in this final chapter. Please share with your loved ones these findings, on my behalf. If it feels right to you, read this letter aloud to them. Remember, we did this together in the group plática? Yes, reading our letters aloud was a vulnerable experience, but it was also a transformative and spiritual one. In either case, please do what feels right to you. It is my hope that this final chapter, structured as a love letter, can provide a succinct, but clear overview of the

major research findings. I begin this letter by offering a recap of the project and explaining how it fits into a larger historical narrative about Chicana/Latina educational resistance and resilience.

As many of us know, the fields of Education, History, and Ethnic Studies have made significant strides in documenting Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences (Barragan Goetz, 2020; García, 2018; San Miguel, 2005), but a systematic focus on Chicana/Latina mother-daughter stories of academic resilience and resistance is dismal (Chavez-Garcia, 2013). Though Chicana/Latina history has come a long way since its inception in the 1960s, Chicana historians continually remind us of the importance of undertaking Chicana/Latina Feminist approaches to historical education analysis (Chavez-Garcia, 2013; Levins Morales, 1998; Molina, 2013; Pérez 1999; Ruiz, 1987, 1998). With your generous collaboration, this research has responded to the dearth in scholarship which analyzes the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters who attended college in the United States during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As I carried out this study, I considered two guiding research questions. I do not believe I shared them with you during the pláticas, so I would like to share them here:

Research Question 1: What are the raced, gendered, classed, individual, and joint experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college between the 1970s and 2020s?

Research Question 2: What are the pedagogies the motherscholars and daughterscholars developed and imparted to one another as they navigated higher education?

I provided extensive answers to these questions in the four findings chapters, and I offer a summary of the research findings here.

In this study, we learned that we, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars have historically faced institutional marginalization resulting from our intersectional identities as Chicana/Latina women, mothers, and daughters. In many ways, our educational life experiences

navigating U.S. education systems were impacted by how educators, educational agents, family, and society at large perceived us. We were often deemed lazy, unwilling, and/or unable to do well in school because of deficit cultural discourse that reinforced racialized and gendered tropes about uneducated Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters (Gandára 1995, 2015; Valencia & Black, 2001). Additionally, we bore the brunt of raced and gendered microaggressions throughout our individual and joint time in college (Caballero et al., 2019; Solórzano & Perez Huber, 2020; Vega, 2019). Economic class standing further compounded experiences of racialized and gendered marginalization. All of us mothers and daughters were working class women and many of us were forced to make paradoxical choices to take on employment that interfered with our study schedules, in order to pay for our college education. Most of us also relied on financial support from institutional and federal programs to fund our progression through college. However, our ability to maintain eligibility and receive funding was impacted by institutional and national practices, as well as our precarious immigration statuses. As a result, we, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars turned to each other to develop strategies of reciprocal support to pay for our schooling. We also learned to navigate higher education spaces as first-generation college students with limited institutional and cultural knowledge. As we progressed through the educational pipeline, together and individually, we learned how to “do school,” and taught one another how to survive and thrive in academia by reimagining a journey through the pipeline where our identities and ways of knowing the world, as motherscholars and daughterscholars, became an educational lifeline.

Though our interlocking encounters with systems of oppression (racism, sexism, and classism, among others) impacted our educational life experiences at the individual and familial level, we were not complacent in passively accepting these experiences of marginalization and

exclusion. Rather, we learned to overcome these challenges by developing strategies of resistance rooted in an ethic of care. We did this by turning to *mujer*-oriented networks—specifically to mother-daughter relationship—and to the raced and gendered practices of care we previously learned, to contend with the challenges that came with our pursuit of a college degree. These raced and gendered socialization practices presented in the form of Chicana/Latina daughterwork and motherwork. Yes, sometimes we felt as though expending daughterwork and motherwork was extractive because it often led to financial, personal, familial, and academic sacrifices. However, our care work also served as a pivotal tool we individually and jointly leveraged to help, not only each other, but a community of motherscholars and daughterscholars to move forward with their academic goals.

In this Birthstory, we heard that the motherscholar-daughterscholar teams played reciprocal roles in inspiring each other to continue moving forward in their academic endeavors. Moreover, the other mothers and daughters played critical roles in facilitating their collective access to and retention in college. These reciprocal socialization practices presented themselves in the form of studying together, living with one another, commuting, eating lunch, taking breaks together, and verbally expressing support for one another. I argue, these practices moved us to effectively embody what it means to straddle our identities as mothers, daughters, and scholars who ensured the wellbeing of other *mujeres* in the family. In effect, we redefined what it means to be a “good daughter,” and “good mother.”

I also found that we, Chicana/Latina women, embraced our motherscholar-daughterscholar identities, all the while embracing the contradictions in our personal lives (Anzaldúa, 2015; Villenas, 2006). We negotiated cultural and gender roles in the home by maintaining face as “good daughters” (Espinoza, 2010) and “good mothers” (Anaya, 2011). But

we also embraced our identities as academics and the numerous responsibilities that accompanied the scholarly subjectivity. Finally, we negotiated a third relationship: that of being a motherscholar-daughterscholar group who worked together to get through college, but also a mother-daughter team that entertained conflicting ideas about how “to do” school and how to be a *mujer de familia*⁹⁸ at the same time.

During our individual and joint college journeys, we found ourselves constantly straddling the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, scholarhood, and tangential nepantla spaces. We were forced to cope with many cultural and academic choques⁹⁹ (Anzaldúa, 2012), but we developed and activated our motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies so as to contend with those cultural tensions. Indeed, by imparting and activating Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies, we negotiated the raced, gendered, and classed layers that governed our individual and collective experiences in college. With these findings, I answered my research questions and I offered an in-depth insight to the raced, gendered, classed, individual, joint, and pedagogical experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars who attended college between the 1972 and 2021.

As I answered my research questions throughout the dissertation, I spotlighted events that I believe characterized your individual and joint time in college and I identified patterns in the ways you all navigated the world as undergraduate and graduate scholars. I also featured divergences in your individual and collective post-secondary pathways to remind readers that each of your journeys is unique. This approach led me highlight Women of Color labor, affirm mothers and daughters by acknowledging their shared humanity, and bridge womanist

⁹⁸ *Mujer de familia* translates to woman of the family.

⁹⁹ Choques are “collisions that occur when ‘two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference collide” (Anzaldúa, 2012 as cited in Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017, p. 29).

experiences across familial and cultural generations. It also led me to see this research as a genesis narrative about Chicana/Latina educational resilience which transcends time and space; for this reason, I humbly title the work, *“Our Stories are More Powerful Together, than they are Apart”*: A Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory (1972-2021). The Birthstory framing was integral because it allowed me to assume a chronological approach as I theorized about the origins of the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena. As a reminder, the motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena is one where mothers and daughters enroll in, and progress through higher education at the same time, at some point in their lives. I use the language of “phenomena” in this dissertation cautiously though. I agree: the fact that there exist Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters (like us) who attended college at times that overlap is remarkable to say the least. But you who lived through this “phenomenal” life journey described the experience not as “phenomenal” in nature, but rather as a normal way of life. I would like to remind us that the strategies we employed as we crossed the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, and scholarhood were phenomenal in that they helped us overcome what others might describe as insurmountable challenges. Indeed, with our motherwork and daughterwork, we collectively achieved phenomenal academic feats. However, I would also like to acknowledge that using terminology such as “phenomena” to describe our lived experience can come off as dehumanizing in many ways. I would like to be clear: At our core, we, Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars, are not some “phenomena” to be observed and dissected under a microscope. We are humans with real feelings and real experiences.

Throughout the course of this study, I reconciled the tension of using academic jargon to describe our experiences as a “phenomenon” by meticulously working to humanize the research process for us all (myself included), from beginning, to end. One way I did this was by meeting

with you all in places that felt comfortable and familiar to you –be it your homes, a local coffee shop, outdoor gardens spaces, and even virtually, on Zoom, because of the physical distancing measures which were in place at the time. Another way I tried to humanize the research process was by providing snacks and sharing meals together during our meet-ups. I worked to ensure that your bodies, minds, and spirits felt nourished during the time we spent together. This act of reciprocity was my way of showing that I cared about you as people and caregivers. I wanted to also ensure the caregivers were cared for. Finally, I did my best to position you all as agentive subjects in the research process, so I invited you all to review the transcripts of the pláticas and the letters. Engaging this step in the research process was important for me to do because it (re)affirmed your centrality as collaborators, not subjects.

I crafted my research findings by triangulating data in the form 24 pláticas, 42 handwritten letters, and supplemental materials noted in my reflexive journal. Together, these pieces helped me construct an educational narrative that provides a look into the lives of nine Chicana/Latina mother-daughter teams (22 women in total) who attended college jointly between 1973 and 2021. Seven of the families (seventeen of women) formally participated in this study by following the research protocol I originally prescribed; and the other two families (five women) contributed in complementary ways. The Levya, Nino, Valencia, R. Peña-Luquin, Abraham, Chipi, and Titus families formally participating in the research by completing an individual and group plática, and by engaging in the letter writing activity. The de Uriarte women and Escobedo mujeres did not formally participate in this research, but their perspectives still shine through in this narrative. Thus, this dissertation offers an analysis of the educational life experiences of 22 Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars. Now that I have

offered an overview of the study and offered a reflection on what the process looked like to carry out the research, I transition to offer a summary about each chapter.

As you now know, this scholarship documents the educational life experiences of Mothers and Daughters of Color who traversed the cultural and academic terrains of the U.S. academe. The study is divided into ten chapters. In the Prologue, I included a positionality statement where I spoke on how and why I came to do Chicana/Latina mother-daughter research. I shared: in many ways, this research tells a story about me and my own mother, Cecilia. She and I, both Chicana/Latina scholars in our respective fields of study (Nursing and Education), have transgressed through college in the greater Los Angeles region as a motherscholar-daughterscholar dyad since the fall of 2011. My younger sister, Abigail, joined us in this effort in 2017 when she started her undergraduate journey pursuing a degree in Psychology. From 2017 to 2021, we three Escobedo women were a motherscholar-daughterscholar trio. In this study there were five mother-daughter duos and four mother-daughter trios. Therefore, I was able to relate to both sets of experiences. The personal connection I had to your stories gave me a unique perspective, a cultural intuition from which to analyze and make sense of the data (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

In Chapter One, I introduced the research and offered a rationale for my research questions. In Chapter Two I situated the study within a larger context about existing scholarship in the field by offering a Critical Race Feminista Review of Literature. And in Chapter Three, I described the methods and methodology guiding the project and by outlining how I merged the plática methodology (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016) with a Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology (Escobedo & Camargo Gonzalez, under review). As a reminder, the plática

methodology is similar to qualitative interviewing, yet it incorporates a Chicana Feminist sensibility (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016).

I also leaned into the Critical Race Feminista Epistolary Methodology because it created opportunities for you all to challenge the historical legacies and contemporary manifestations of racist and gendered oppression through the construction of your handwritten letters. I thank you all for your collaboration and extend a special appreciation for your willingness to engage in the letter writing portions of this study. Thank you for being vulnerable in undertaking this endeavor. You all confirmed that in the technology-ridden world we live in, rarely do we take the time to grab a paper and writing utensil to spew out our innermost thoughts. I agree with you, Sofia and Frida, when we craft letters addressed to our loved ones with only a pen in hand, we experience intense moments of vulnerability because we feel as though we cannot “take what we wrote back.” This letter writing process makes it such that the thoughts we had circling in our minds felt “more concrete, more final,” because they stood alone on a piece of paper. But I also agree with you, Glorita and Karla, this letter-writing process enabled us to express that which we may not have ever vocalized otherwise. I would like to reassure you all that your plática transcripts and handwritten letters have now become part of a developing archive which documents the education life experiences of Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars. To my knowledge, this is the first archive of its kind. Thank you for sharing such rich and invigorating stories. With your collaboration, I was able to craft Chapters Four through Eight—these five chapters constitute the findings and implications of this work.

My findings are presented in a four-part story; that which I call the *Chicana/Latina Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Educational Birthstory (1972-2021)*. In order to highlight key themes across this 50-year time span, I designated a particular timeframe for each chapter. In

Chapter Four, I traced the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar phenomena back to 1973. In this section, I introduced Dr. Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte, and her daughter, Dr. Cristina Bodinger-de Uriarte. The de Uriarte women are amongst the first Chicana/Latina mother-daughter pairs to be enrolled in college concurrently in the United States (1973–1978) and to share Yale University graduation ceremonies (1978). From the de Uriarte narrative, we learned that that maternal and daughteral educational trajectories across times and space, begin to parallel one another in the proceeding chapters into the 1980s and 1990s.

In Chapter Five, I built on the de Uriarte family’s educational life history to provide context about what it was like to for seven of the mamas who attended college between the 1980s and 1990s. Mamás, in this chapter, I explained though you did not physically cross paths with one another, you joined each other as colleagues in the cohort of Chicana/Latina women who experienced college for the first time in their lives between the 1980s and 1990s. Mamás, as I weaved your individual narratives together in Chapter Five, I found that your educational and life decisions were vastly impacted by personal circumstances (i.e., by your changing statuses as daughters and soon-to-be mothers), but also from factors outside of your immediate control such as federal and state legislation, and institutional policies and practices characteristic of the socio-political time. As the chapter progressed, I noted how a heightened sense of hostility directed towards Mothering Students of Color and mothering-students-to-be prominent during the 1980s-1990s continued on into the twenty-first century, the time when many of your daughters were born.

In Chapters Six and Seven I began a discussion about the daughters’ individual educational journey throughout 2000s and 2010s, and about the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s and 2020s. In these final chapters of the birthstory, I spoke on

two key themes which I believed characterized your joint higher educational experiences. *Mamás y Hijas*, in the *pláticas* and in your letters, you all referenced the joys and perils of mothering and daughtering as non-traditional college students, as well as the personal and academic dilemma you experienced straddling the borderlands of motherhood, daughterhood, and scholarhood. In Chapter Six, I spoke to the first theme. In Chapter Seven, I spoke to the second theme. I provide more details below.

In Chapter Six, I continued building on the birthstory narrative by inviting us to step into the first and second decades of the 21st century. Throughout this chapter, I weaved in an intergenerational discussion about daughteral educational excellence by introducing the daughters and speaking on their early academic trajectories. Following this, I begin a discussion about the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years of the 2010s to 2020s by introducing Gaby and Danielle Abraham. In this section, I highlighted notable moments which characterized Danielle's and Gaby's joint time as nontraditional college students to unveil the joys and perils of Chicana/Latina mothering and daughtering.

Hijas, in Chapter Seven, I described how your educational journeys came to fruition at a time that overlapped with your mothers' collegiate trajectory, and I continued the narrative about the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years. As I moved us along the birthstory chronology, I weaved in a discussion about the Chicana/Latina daughterwork and the Chicana/Latina motherscholar-daughterscholar pedagogies you all developed and enacted as you moved along your higher education pathways. *Mamás y Hijas*, I also zoned in on the joint motherscholar-daughterscholar years and I explained how you all strategically leveraged your motherwork and daughterwork to uphold your status as "good mothers" and "good daughters. The birthstory ended with Chapter Seven.

As I drafted the four-part findings series, I was reaffirmed in my belief that it is important to narrate Chicana/Latina stories of resistance for the sake of historical documentation; but it is equally important to provide educational stakeholders (i.e., faculty, higher education administrators, policy makers, and researchers) suggestions and recommendations for how to continue supporting Motherscholars and Daughterscholars of Color as they move along in their post-secondary journeys. This praxis-driven impetus led me to craft Chapter Nine; here, I offered recommendations for developing programming, policies, practices, and research centered around the needs of Families and Students of Color with Dependents. I drew inspiration from the very poignant suggestions you all provided during the individual and group pláticas to craft the Recommendations and Implications chapter. This section was framed with a multi-generational paradigm in mind (this approach positions young and adult children, parents, and extended family as vital stakeholders for academic advancement). It is my hope that educational stakeholders across various spheres of influence will move forward with materializing the recommendations we provided. I believe that our testimonies and explicit calls to action can enact real, tangible change with the potential to impact the educational life trajectories of generations of women and families to come.

In this final chapter, the Epilogue, I thank you all endlessly for your collaboration in documenting and uplifting Chicana/Latina mother-daughter intellectual genealogies. Collectively, you teach us that Chicana/Latina women strategically negotiate the terrains of motherhood, daughterhood, and academia by engaging in care practices that nurture their spiritual, physical, and interpersonal wellbeing, practices that I have collectively termed Chicana daughterwork and Chicana motherwork (Caballero et al., 2019; Collins, 2009; Vega, 2019). Individually, you teach us that Mothers and Daughters of Color who attend college at the same

time continue to cultivate their identities as *mujers bien educadas*¹⁰⁰ when they engage in teaching and learning processes for the purposes of facilitating intergenerational success. In this concluding section, I humbly address each one of you, by name, to remind you of the legacies you have left for the world and I thank you for what you have taught us all.

Mercedes, you teach us that “life has a way of intervening and teaching. As soon as your children [and I might add, parents,] start school, you begin to see flaws in the system.” You taught me to highlight these “flaws” in this study and to offer educational stakeholders practical solutions for dismantling them.

Cristina, you teach us that in order to truly understand the “outcome of [mother-daughter] college experiences,” it is important to honor the individual narratives of resistance.

Frida, you teach us that “If things don’t turn out the way you expected, reflect and learn, and apply that experience to your future endeavors.”

Maria, you remind us that “anything is possible [for Chicana/Latina mothers and daughters] and that whatever we choose to do, to do it with love and patience.”

Nela, you teach us that motherscholars play critical roles in socializing their daughters to pursue a college education because they model what it means to practice, “compassion, patience, knowledge, and dedication towards your career.”

Socorro Genoveva, you teach us that teaching and learning between mothers and daughters is a reciprocal process. Though a lot of people “think most of the learning would be from the parent to the child, [daughters also teach mothers] a lot back.”

Selena, you teach us that Chicana/Latina motherscholars are important to their daughters because they offer both emotional and instrumental forms of support. I agree, my own mother,

¹⁰⁰ *Mujeres bien educadas* translates to women who are holistically, morally, and formally educated.

like so many others have, “always been there, whether it was for me to talk to, or when I literally needed someone to tutor me.”

Francisca, you teach us that “it is not easy to manage school, family life, [and] work responsibilities, but that challenge...helps us grow in a way that we might not otherwise.”

Priscilla, you teach us Chicana/Latina women have always led advocacy efforts to ensure that Communities of Color thrive, “not only in family spaces, but at work, in community spaces,” I agree, Priscilla, “We need that advocacy. And . . . at the forefront, son mujeres who get shit done. I’ve seen it. I respect them.”

Paulina, you teach us to acknowledge the labor motherscholars and daughterscholars perform. You remind us to show our appreciation by sharing messages like, “Thanks for being supportive. Thanks for being patient.”

Glorita, you teach us that Chicana/Latina daughters are critical motivators and profound sources of “encouragement [for immigrant mothers] who pursue [their] goal in this country.”

Karla, you teach us “that time is sometimes a silly concept [for Mothers and Daughters of Color]. There is no limit to what we can learn and when we can do it. It is never bad or shameful to seek new knowledge.”

Gaby, you teach us that for motherscholars, their young and adult children are “el motor para poder seguir estudiando.”¹⁰¹ Though times get tough, children played significant roles in supporting their mothers along the arduous journey of higher learning.

Danielle, you teach us Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars are nepantleras. Through their words and with their actions, these women model how a

¹⁰¹ “El motor para poder seguir estudiando” translates to “the engine that keeps me moving forward in my studies.”

Chicana/Latina woman can “redefine her own narrative, she can create her own narrative, she can create her own opportunities the way that she has, and it’s inspiring.”

Erika, you teach us that motherscholars and daughterscholars “are going places academically, [Therefore, we should remember to] never give up on [our] dreams.”

Cindy, you teach us that “life doesn’t have to be perfect in order to want to better [ourselves] and strive for [our] own goals.”

Sofia, you teach us that “we are strong women together. We help each other but are also learning to give each other space to grow.”

Renee, you teach us that “everything will fall into place. It may sound impossible, but it’s not anything [we] haven’t done before. We are strong, independent, smart, and resilient.”

Alanis, you teach us that Chicana/Latina motherscholars and daughterscholars are indeed “badass chingonas, [but they should] remember to do some self-care, reflecting, and something for [themselves] to take a break from [the] stresses of work [and] school.”

Abigail, my sister, you taught me what it means to “fight for what I believe [in] . . . and [to not] be afraid to show or say how I am feeling.” I too, “look up to you,” and I admire your love of life and learning.

Finally, **Dr. Cecilia R. Escobedo, my mother**, you taught me to treasure and never forget the following: “[Chicana/Latina Mothers and Daughters enrolled in college together] are all navigating the same canal . . . I believe that this [study is important because it] might help another young lady like yourself, it might help another student [like me], or it might help another human being. Princess you are my voice. So what can I tell you about the educational experiences of mothers and daughters—you’re the closest [person] to me [that might be able to understand my journey. You have] the potential to put this in writing . . . Tell somebody [our

story].” Mom, I’m using this dissertation as a platform from which to share with the world our individual and collective journeys of educational resistance and success. I hope that in telling our stories, I did you, my sister, my collaborators, and myself justice.

Thank you Mamás y Hijas for your labor, love, and tenacity. I am grateful that we have taken the leap to document, “the histories of the women in our family” in this dissertation. Your individual and collective narratives are as Merle Woo (1981) describes, “quite a story.” I can attest that “[all of] you started something. Maybe you feel ambivalent or doubtful about it, but you did it. Actually, you should be proud of what you’ve begun. I am” (p. 144). It truly is an honor for me to have learned and loved alongside you. Thank you for helping birth this story of Chicana/Latina educational resistance and resilience into existence.

With Love, and in Solidarity,

Cindy R. Escobedo, Chicana Daughterscholar

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT FLYER



PARTICIPATE IN A UCLA DOCTORAL STUDY

EXPLORING LATINA/CHICANA MOTHER-DAUGHTER JOURNEYS

DO YOU IDENTIFY AS LATINA/CHICANA?

ARE/WERE YOU AND YOUR MOTHER/DAUGHTER IN
COLLEGE AT THE SAME TIME?

WOULD YOU AND YOUR MOTHER/DAUGHTER BE
INTERESTED IN SHARING MORE ABOUT YOUR
EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS?



If you answered yes, consider participating in a research study that explores teaching and learning between mothers and daughters.

By participating, you are invited to complete the following: a questionnaire, an individual plática (conversational interview), and a paired mother-daughter plática. Embedded in both pláticas are letter-writing activities. Participation, per person, will take approximately five hours.



For information, contact Cindy R. Escobedo & Dr. Daniel Solórzano

Email: cindyescobedo@ucla.edu

Interest Form: <https://forms.gle/Kr856s7imbLLkFpEA>

APPENDIX B: SCREENING CONSENT SCRIPT

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES SCREENING CONSENT SCRIPT

Exploring Latina/Chicana Mother-Daughter Collegiate Journeys
Cindy R. Escobedo, Principal Investigator

Thank you for calling me, *Cindy R. Escobedo* regarding the study, Exploring Latina/Chicana Mother-Daughter Collegiate Journeys. I would like to ask you a few questions in order to determine whether you may be eligible for the research. Before I begin the screening, I would like to tell you a little bit about the research. This research centers the experiences of Latina/Chicana mothers and daughters who attend college at the same time (in other words, mothers and daughters whose time in college overlapped at some point). The purpose of this project is to make sense of the experiences of Latina/Chicana mothers and daughters who attend college at the same time. Specifically, I am looking to make meaning of teaching and learning processes that develop between motherscholar-daughterscholar pairs.

Would you like to continue with the screening? The screening will take about five to ten minutes. I will ask you about your educational history, your time in college with your mom/daughter, and your contact information.

Your participation is voluntary and your answers to this screening consent will be confidential. No one will know your answers except for the research team. Please note, you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or feel uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. If you qualify for the study and decide to participate, I will keep your answers as part of the data collected for this research. If you do not qualify for the study and/or decide not to participate, I will delete your answers.

Would you like to continue with the screening? [*If no, thank the person and hang-up*]

[*If yes, continue with the screening – screening questions*]

- Do you identify as either Latina or Chicana?
- Do you identify as a motherscholar or daughterscholar? (A Motherscholar is woman who is both a mother and scholar/student. A Daughterscholar is a woman who is both a daughter and scholar/student).
- Did your time in college overlap with your mother's/daughter's at some point? In other words, did you go to college at the same time as your mother/daughter)?
- What is the name of the last higher education institution you attended?
- What year in college are you currently in (for example, first year freshman in community college, first year transfer student at the university)?
- What higher education institution type(s) have you attended (for example, community college, four-year public institution, four-year private university)?
- What is the name of the last higher education institution your mother/daughter attended?
- What year in school is your mother/daughter in?
- What higher education institution type(s) has your mother/daughter attended (for example, community college, four-year public institution, four-year private university)?
- Have you spoken to your mother/daughter about this study?
- Do you think your mother/daughter would be willing to participate in the study?

APPENDIX C: ONLINE INTAKE FORM

11/7/21, 1:08 PM

Exploring Latina/Chicana Mother-Daughter Collegiate Journeys

Exploring Latina/Chicana Mother-Daughter Collegiate Journeys

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation study. In order to determine your eligibility for participation, I would like to ask a few questions. It will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete this form. Please note, you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or feel uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time.

If you qualify for the study and decide to participate, I will keep your answers as part of the data collected. If you do not qualify for the study and/or decide not to participate, I will delete your answers. Your participation is voluntary and your answers will be confidential.

In solidarity,
Cindy R. Escobedo
cindyescobedo@ucla.edu

Protocol ID: IRB# 19-000778 UCLA IRB Approved Approval Date: 5/13/2019 Committee: North General IRB

* Required

1. Email *

2. First Name *

3. Last Name *

4. Cell Phone Number (please also identify preference for text and/or call)

APPENDIX D: INDIVIDUAL PLÁTICA PROTOCOL

*Note: The plática is designed to be conversational in nature. Therefore, the questions included in this protocol were created to serve as guiding questions. The research team and persons administering the pláticas will attempt to follow the protocol as it exists, but the great possibility exists that questions may be added or amended, per the nature of the conversation. Additionally, embedded within the pláticas will be the Epistolary Writing activities. I denote where those are to take place, in italics.

Introduction

- Welcome
- Introductions/Check-Ins
- Share purpose of study once more
- Share about what to expect during the meeting today
 - Structure of the plática
 - Structure of letter writing activity
 - Fill out Demographic Information Sheet
- Check in about confidentiality- Is it ok to use real names and names of places (i.e., identifying information)
 - For those requesting confidentiality: In order to protect your identity, I would like to assign you a pseudonym; is there a name you would like to go by?
- Ask about clarifying questions/comments before beginning
- Begin with Epistolary activity to warm up

Epistolary Writing Prompt 1

You are invited to hand write a letter to your mother/daughter where you explain your motives for pursuing higher education. Consider what lead you to college, what excited you, what made you feel a bit nervous. Reflect on how your mother/daughter fits into your personal journey through college.

Transition to Plática

Now that you've had an opportunity to think about your motives for going to school and the persons who played a critical role in your educational careers, I'd like for us to begin a more detailed conversation about your family and home background, your individual journey to college, and the role that your mother/daughter played in supporting your inside and outside of the schooling context.

In this plática we will be focusing specifically on your time in college. Therefore, this conversation will center teaching and learning practices that took place between you and your mom/daughter, specifically as they relate to your individual and collective college journeys. Let's begin by you sharing a little bit about yourself and where you grew up.

Family Background and Home Context

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- Can you share a little bit about where you grew up and what that was like?

- If Applicable: Can you share a bit about your immigration story?
- Can you tell me about your family?
 - How did your family shape who you were then and now? What did they do?
 - Can you tell me about your mother/daughter?
 - What are some of the things you admire about her?
 - What were some of her views about education?

Discussion about Educación (Schooling and Home contexts)

- What does educación (education) mean to you?
- Describe to me what you think educación (education) means to your mother/daughter?
- Describe to me how your mother/daughter has impacted your educational journey?
 - How has she (did she) shaped your educational aspirations?
 - How has she (did she) shape your time in college?
 - Could you please tell me about a time where you had a challenge in school and your mom/daughter supported you to overcome that challenge.
 - Could you please tell me about a successful time in your in school and how your mom/daughter supported you during this time.
- What would a typical week (or 3-5 days) for you and your mother/daughter look like from the moment you wake up, until you go to sleep?
- If we consider responsibilities and obligation outside of just school (like work, home, personal responsibilities) could you please share with me how you balanced/negotiated the following, in addition to your schooling?
 - Work Obligations
 - Home/Domestic Responsibilities (care for others, food)?
 - School related expectations (i.e., tests, books, lectures, readings, events, collaborative assignments)?
- What are some things that you learned about your mother/daughter with respect to balancing all these competing responsibilities?
- In light of all these different responsibilities, what does it (did it) mean to care for your mother/daughter throughout your time in college?
 - In other words, what sort of practices or work did you engage in to ensure your mother's/daughter's wellbeing?

Exploring Motherscholar-Daughterscholar Pedagogies

- If we think about your mother/daughter as a teacher, how would you describe her teaching?
 - Could you please tell me about some of the important things your mother/daughter has taught you?
 - Why are (were) these lessons important?
 - What is a saying or story that your mother/daughter shared/always brings you back to, that has stuck with you and impacts your way of life in some way.
- How would you compare the education you received from your mother/daughter in relation to the one you have received in school?
 - Can you point to any particular differences in the education you received from your mom/daughter and the education at school?

Conclusion

- Why do you think mothers/daughter are so important for Latina/Chicana college students?^[1]_[SEP]
- What would you like others to know about your mother's/daughter's role in your education?
- Is there anything you would like to add that maybe I did not give you an opportunity to speak on?^[1]_[SEP]
- Do you have any questions for me?^[1]_[SEP]

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET



DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

PERSONAL INFORMATION

EDUCATIONAL & OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY



Name:

Elementary School & Graduation Year:

Birthdate:

Middle School & Graduation Year:

Country of Origin:

High School & Graduation Year:

Hometown:

College(s) Attended & Graduation Year(s):

Number of Siblings & Birth Order:

Academic Goals:

Mother's Highest Level of Education:

College Occupation:

Father's Highest Level of Education:

Occupational/Career Goals:



CONTACT INFORMATION

Email:

Phone Number:

Preferred Pseudonym:



APPENDIX F: PROTOCOL FOR PAIRED PLÁTICAS

*Note: The plática is designed to be conversational in nature. Therefore, the questions included in this protocol were created to serve as guiding points. The questions that will be used will vary from plática to plática, based on preliminary analysis of individual pláticas and epistolary writings from the individual pláticas. The research team and persons administering the pláticas will attempt to follow the protocol as it exists, but the great possibility exists that questions may be added or amended, per the nature of the conversation.

Introduction

- Welcome
- Introductions/Check-Ins
- Share purpose of study once more
- Share about what to expect during the meeting today (structure of the plática and letter writing activity)
- Check in in about confidentiality- Is it ok to use real names and names of places (i.e., identifying information)
 - For those requesting confidentiality: In order to protect your identity, I would like to assign you a pseudonym; is there a name you would like to go by?
- Ask about clarifying questions/comments before beginning
- Begin with Epistolary activity to warm up

Epistolary Writing Prompt 2

You are invited to write a letter where you reflect on your journey as a mother-daughter pair. Please share a bit about what it is/was like to go to school together. What was a memorable moment that defined your time in school, and why was it memorable? Consider sharing lessons that you might have learned from your mother/daughter which have been foundational to your educational journey. What were lessons you think you might have taught to your mother/daughter?

Preliminary Codes from the Epistolary Letters

Thank you for sharing your written reflections, we will return to them soon. I'd like to now share some of my preliminary findings with you all to see if I'm on the right track.

- Share Preliminary Findings specific to the mother-daughter pair

Reflections on Identity as a Motherscholar/Daughterscholar

- What four words would you chose to describe your mother/daughter and why would you chose those?
- What four words would you chose to describe yourselves as a pair and why would you chose those?
- What does it mean to both of you to be a motherscholar/daughterscholar?
- What would both of you like others to know about motherscholars/daughterscholars?
- What can institutions of higher learning, policy makers, researchers, and families do to support motherscholars and daughterscholars throughout their schooling?

- Now we will transition to the final part of the paired plática- finishing the last epistolary writing activity and ending with a final reflection.

Epistolary Writing Prompt 3

Epistolary Writing Prompt: In this final exercise, you are invited to offer consejos (advice) or share cuentos (stories) that you think your mother/daughter might find helpful as she moves forward with her educational and/or life endeavors. What would you like for her to remember? Moving forward, how might you support her in these endeavors?

- Response to Epistolary Writing Prompt 3:
 - Now that you constructed your letter, can you read it out loud to us?
 - Would either of you like to respond to what you wrote, or what you heard?
 - Where you surprised about what you heard, or was it what you expected?
- Reflection on the Epistolary Methodology
 - What was the process of writing it out like? Could you walk me through some of the emotions that you were feeling when you were writing it out?
 - How was writing out your experiences with your mother/daughter different than talking about them?
 - How do you think writing it out by hand would have been different than typing it out?
 - Was it a lot of work to write the letters, did it take a lot of your time? Would you have rather just talked it out?
 - How can we think about letter writing as a teaching process? In other words, what can letters teach us about motherscholars and daughterscholars?

Wrapping Up

- (Daughterscholar's name) is there anything that you want to tell your mom that you haven't told her before, or expressed enough with regards to your education?
- (Motherscholar's name) is there anything that you want to tell your daughter that you haven't told her before, or expressed enough with regards to your education?
- Are there any questions or anything either of you would like to add that I haven't given you the opportunity to speak to?

APPENDIX G: PROTOCOL FOR EPISTOLARY WRITINGS



LETTER #1

My Educational Journey

You are invited to hand write a letter to your mother/daughter where you explain your **motives for pursuing** higher education. Consider what lead you to college, what excited you, what made you feel a bit nervous. Reflect on **how your mother/daughter fits into your personal journey** through college.





LETTER #2

Our Educational Journey

You are invited to write a letter where you reflect on your journey as a mother-daughter pair. Please share a bit about **what it is/was like to go to school together**. What was a **memorable moment** that defined your time in school, and why was it memorable? Consider sharing lessons that you might have **learned from** your mother/daughter which have been foundational to your educational journey. What were lessons you think you might have **taught to** your mother/daughter?





LETTER #3

Looking Back & Moving Forward

In this final exercise, you are invited to write a letter where you **offer consejos** (advice) or **share cuentos** (stories) that you think your mother/daughter might find helpful as she moves forward with her educational and/or life endeavors. What would you like for her to remember? Conclude by sharing **how might you support her** in these endeavors.



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