Title

Persisting Dreams: The Impact of the Doctoral Socialization Process on Latina Post-Doctoral Career Aspirations

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/76q0d021

Author

Westerband, Yamissette

Publication Date

2016

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Persisting Dreams:

The Impact of the Doctoral Socialization Process on Latina

Post-Doctoral Career Aspirations

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in The Department of Gender Studies

by

Yamissette Milagros Westerband

2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Persisting Dreams:

The Impact of the Doctoral Socialization Process on Latina

Post-Doctoral Career Aspirations

by

Yamissette Milagros Westerband

Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of Gender Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Daniel G. Solorzano, Co-Chair

Professor Elizabeth A. Marchant, Co-Chair

Latinas are underrepresented within the professorate and within doctoral programs, particularly within Research Intensive Institutions. This dissertation explores how the doctoral socialization process impacts the pipeline from the Ph.D. to scholarly careers for Latinas in Research universities. Given the low numbers of representation and production at the doctoral level for Latinas, what happens when they do enter Ph.D. programs? Their doctoral experience must be marked in one way or another by their identities as women of color in institutions where they are the overwhelming minority. More significantly, how does their doctoral experience groom them to become future faculty members in the academy? In this dissertation, I examine the doctoral experiences for Latinas and how their educational experiences impact their post-doctoral career aspirations and career trajectories.

The dissertation of Yamissette Milagros Westerband is approved.

Maylei S. Blackwell

Daniel G. Solorzano, Co-Chair

Elizabeth A. Marchant, Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Mami. Eres mi inspiración, mi héroe, y mi guía.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is for my parents, my guardian angels from up above. Mami, yo sé lo mucho que sacrificaste para yo poder lograr esto. Sé que estas celebrando conmigo. Pa, thank you for teaching me to honor my intellect, for encouraging me to be a bookworm, and for being a great cheerleader. You can now officially call me "Dr. Westerband!" I know you are both guiding me and blessing my journey as I move forward in my career.

Tio Julio and Tia Tania, your support changed my life. I now do the work of mentoring others due to the example you set for me. Through your love and support, I became who I was meant to be.

My little brother Hector, you have grown up to be an admirable man, and your success inspires me to pursue my dreams with fervor. You share my pride in honoring our parents' legacy and it's a privilege to be able to achieve success with you at my side.

My partner Kim, thank you for offering me balance and perspective during the Ph.D. You were a refuge during this process, you kept me sane and you never let me give up. Thank you for the encouraging words, the comedic relief, and for the many meals.

Professor Daniel Solorzano, you have taught me the true meaning of mentorship. Your unwavering patience, your generosity with your time, and your steadfast guidance made it possible for me to complete this journey. You welcomed me as a mentee and truly allowed me to blossom as a researcher. Your support completely changed my doctoral education, and I am deeply grateful to you.

Professor Elizabeth Marchant, thank you for being a unwavering advocate for me, for facilitating my path in Gender Studies, and for never losing faith in me. I feel fortunate to have

you as a mentor. Professor Maylei Blackwell, you have been with me on this path since the very beginning. Thank you for your loyalty and for your encouraging words. I did it!!

To Rosie, Frieda, Domino and Shakira, thank you for keeping me company during this process, for the many cuddles, for keeping me warm, and for comforting me when things were challenging.

Finally, I am grateful to all of you who have served as an academic community to me. Rigoberto Marquez and Christopher Sweeten, you introduced me to the world of education and the world of AAP. Your insight helped me navigate this sometimes confusing place. The UCLA RAC (Research Apprenticeship Course) and the UCLA Education graduate student community was a true place of academic support.

They say it takes a village, and my doctoral career is truly an example of this.

Yamissette Westerband, MA, MSW, Ph.D. (Candidate)

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate
>Gender Studies Department
>University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), 2016

M.S.W.
>Social Work Department
>University of Michigan Ann Arbor, 2007

M.A.
>Gender Studies Department
>University of Texas at Austin, 2005

B.A.
>Law & Society/ Women's Studies
>University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), 2000

STUDENT ADVISING/MENTORSHIP

2015-Present
California State University Fullerton (CSUF)
Ronald E. McNair (TRIO) Research Scholars Program
Assistant Director
➢ Provide individual academic advising to McNair Scholars, offer instructional seminars, develop McNair program, work on TRIO grants management.

2011-2013
University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)
Academic Advancement Program (AAP)/McNair (TRIO) Research Scholars Program
Student Academic Mentor/Advisor
➢ Worked with the McNair (TRIO) Research Scholars Program to increase diversity in the academy by increasing access for first generation college students. All of the students mentored were underrepresented students who went on to pursue graduate education.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/SOCIAL WORK

2006-2007 University of Michigan MSW Field Placement
Associate Program Director, Triangle Foundation, Detroit, MI
➢ Coordinated all aspects of the youth leadership institute serving at risk LGBT youth. Recruited, trained and supervised staff. Developed workshop and staff training curriculum. Developed publicity materials. Facilitated support groups.

2003-2005 V-Day Worldwide Campaign to Stop Violence Against Women, Austin, TX Director and Executive Producer "The Vagina Monologues"

➢ Produced and directed V-Day World Campaign to Stop Violence Against Women to raise funds for domestic violence organizations. Managed all aspects of production, including budget, venue, publicity, media, and ticket sales. Had sold out shows with audiences of 250 plus people per performance.

2003-2005 LLEGO National Council Member on Domestic Violence Prevention in Latina/o Communities, Washington, DC.

➢ Developed curriculum on same-sex domestic violence issues. Provided workshops to domestic violence support service providers on same-sex domestic violence awareness.

2002-2003 Austin Latina/o LGBT Organization (ALLGO), Austin, TX
Health Educator/Women's Program Coordinator

➢ Produced community building and health education events for women, including weekend retreats, monthly dances, and cultural arts events. Facilitated support groups serving community members. Created and facilitated workshops on drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, breast cancer education, and women's health.

2001-2002 Fundación PR, San Juan, PR
Health Educator/Women's Program Coordinator

➢ Produced community building events and health education workshops on drug and alcohol abuse and women's health. Performed outreach and trainings to other community based programs to improve visibility of program and increase cultural sensitivity.

2000-2001 Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center
(SBRCC) Crisis Intervention Coordinator

➢ Coordinated the 24-hour Emergency Hotline serving survivors of assault. Supervised and trained crisis intervention personnel and volunteers. Collaborated with local law enforcement to build relationship between SBRCC and law enforcement personnel. Provided crisis counseling to SBRCC clients.

LANGUAGES

Spanish: Native Speaker, Advanced Reading, Writing, Speaking

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Women of color in the academy are not commonplace, we are an aberration-outliers. We often ask ourselves, how is it that I "arrived" when so many others like me haven't? Will someone discover that a mistake was made and I don't really belong here? How long will it take for "them" to realize that I am an impostor, an "other," I'm not one of them? (Solorzano, Yosso, 2001, p.485)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)[1] scholars in the field of Education argue that academic institutions operate in contradictory ways: they have the potential to emancipate and empower its members while also having the potential to oppress and marginalize (Solorzano, Yosso, 2002). One example of this is seen in the doctoral educational experiences and attainments of Latinas and in the statistics that clearly illustrate how they are weeded out of the educational system.

Critical Race Theory scholars in Education illustrate that "Latinas have the lowest levels of attainment at every stage of the educational pipeline" (Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006, p.3). The educational pipeline in the United States is simply not designed with Latinas in mind. For example, as one study in 2006 shows, among 100 Latinas who begin elementary school, a little more than half will graduate from high school, only 11 will receive a college degree, and eventually, less than 1 of the original 100 Latinas will complete a doctoral degree (Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006). These are startling statistics. Studies also show that the underrepresentation of Latinas in doctoral programs is not improving significantly with time. For example, of female doctoral recipients, the number of Latinas only increased from 3.5% in 1990 to 5% in 2000 (Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006). In 2006, only 5.4% of

---

[1] Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education "challenges the dominant course on race and racism as they relate to education by examining how educational theory, policy and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups" (Solorzano, 2002, p.123). There are five tenets that make up CRT, including 1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, 2) the challenge to dominant ideology, 3) a commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiental knowledge, and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective (Solorzano, 2002).

female doctoral recipients in the United States were Latinas, only slightly higher than the 5% six years prior (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; Espinoza, 2001).

Even within the professorate, Latinas tend to be underrepresented and face structural inequalities. For example, women occupy lower ranks in the academy in larger proportions than men, and "faculty of color are concentrated in academic departments that often have fewer resources and are considered less prominent and prestigious within higher education, such as humanities, ethnic studies, women's studies, education, and the social sciences" (Bernal, Villalpando, 2002, p.170). Dolores Delgado Bernal and Octavio Villalpando argue that this stratification is not an accident, and in fact has some very concrete repercussions on the forms of knowledge that are created within the university, and what is considered "legitimate" knowledge within these spaces. Within Research Intensive Institutions, there is an "apartheid of knowledge" that silences the voices of people of color, and what dominates is "a Eurocentric epistemological perspective that can subtly and not so subtly ignore and discredit the ways of knowing and understanding the world that faculty of color often bring to academia" (Bernal, Villalpando, 2002, p.171).

Research Questions

Given the low numbers of representation and production at the doctoral level for Latinas, what happens when they do enter Ph.D. programs? Their doctoral experience must be marked in one way or another by their identities as women of color in institutions where they are the overwhelming minority. More significantly, how does their doctoral experience groom them to become future faculty members in the academy? In this dissertation, I will examine not simply the doctoral experiences for Latinas, but more specifically, how their educational experiences

impact their post-doctoral career aspirations and career trajectories. I will explore how the socialization process[2] in doctoral programs nurtures or challenges their academic career goals.

My research questions are the following: How do institutional and interpersonal factors affect Latina doctoral educational experiences in Research Intensive Institutions? How do these factors influence their pursuit of professional careers in the academy? How do Latina doctoral students in these Research Intensive Institutions respond to these institutional and interpersonal factors?

Within my research questions, I wish to explore various aspects of the doctoral and post-doctoral experience. My research will hypothesize whether Latinas experience a "cooling out" of their academic career goals in the process of their doctoral socialization.[3] Do some Latinas who enter Research Intensive Institutions with the intention of going on to pursue scholarly

---

[2] Doctoral socialization can be defined as how one is taught and learns to be an academic. When students enter graduate school and later the professorate, they don't enter these spaces as fully formed graduate students or future faculty members, but are taught directly and indirectly how to become one. Academic socialization describes the process graduate students go through to become indoctrinated into academia, including learning the skills and modes of conduct considered appropriate and necessary to navigate the academy. This can include anything from the language one uses (such as "scholarly language"), the modes of writing utilized in a particular discipline, the forms of dress considered appropriate in different academic spaces, the forms of knowledge production that are valued, to the behaviors one should not engage in as an academic. Academic socialization may vary depending on identity, such as gender and race. For example, female academics report being dissuaded from getting married or having children as graduate students, as marriage and pregnancy are seen as compromising an academic future. Men, on the other hand, do not experience this and do not receive these messages from mentors, acquiring a family and children are not seen as compromising their academic future (Watford, 2007). There are also positive and negative forms of academic socialization. For example, learning how to successfully conduct oneself in a classroom setting in order to engage in a productive dialogue may be considered positive socialization. However, being taught to be cutthroat or undermining of colleagues may be considered negative academic socialization. It should be noted that I have developed this definition of academic socialization, as I did not find an established definition that I found fitting. I came to this definition while presenting my work during a Research Apprenticeship Course and discussing how graduate students are taught to become graduate students.

[3] The "cooling out function" is a theory most commonly utilized in Education research on community colleges. It describes the phenomenon experienced by many students of color, women, LGBT and working class students who enter the community college with aspirations of transferring to 4 year universities and obtaining a Bachelor's degree, but are dissuaded and deterred from doing so by institutional factors. Additionally, because of their social identities, these students are not seen as worthy or possessing the potential to transfer to four-year universities, and are both overtly and insidiously tracked away from the route to transfer. In essence, their dreams of obtaining a Bachelor's degree from a four-year university are "cooled out". Goffman originally coined the theory, "cooling the mark out", which describes how an institution can pull off a con or fraud on a victim while not being suspected of doing so (Goffman, 1952; Clark, 1960, 1980).

3

careers in these same types of institutions alter or support their professional goals due to their experiences during the Ph.D.?[4] Additionally, I examine the forms of professional development Latinas receive when they do choose to pursue academic careers; how are they prepared for the academic job market? I will explore how their racial or gender identities play a role in this socialization.

Included in this study, I theorize how the forms of mentorship experienced by Latinas during the Ph.D. impact not only their doctoral experiences, but also the career paths they choose. I will argue that there is a direct correlation with the quality of mentorship received by Latinas during the doctorate, and the types of careers they choose post-Ph.D.

---

[4] It should be noted that Latina doctoral students do report also having positive mentoring and doctoral socialization experiences in addition to challenging ones, but that these tend to be the exception (Burciaga, 2007; Watford, 2007).

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Frameworks

In order to answer these research questions, I draw from several theoretical frameworks. My dissertation is based on Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education, as well as Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit). Critical Race Theory in Education challenges the ways race and racism impacts educational structures, practices and discourses, and works toward the liberatory potential of schooling (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000). CRT challenges white privilege and questions the claims made by educational institutions of color blindness, objectivity, meritocracy and equal opportunities. It argues that these claims actually function to mask power and privilege that serve dominant groups within educational settings. CRT directly confronts the idea that educational systems are set up equally and questions the belief that academic success is only reflective of individual student effort. It gives minorities a voice and acknowledges their experiences in education as not only valid but valuable, and by doing so it brings to light how educational systems are often reflective of the social inequalities existent within lager society. CRT provides a language with which to describe these dynamics and offers a lens to describe existing structural barriers within the U.S. educational systems impacting minorities (racial, gender, sexual, ability). Additionally, Critical Race Theory (CRT) centers outsider, mestiza, transgressive knowledge and argues that if theory and knowledge has been utilized to silence people of color, it can also be employed to empower and give people of color a voice (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000). Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) adds to Critical Race Theory by exploring the layers of racialized subordination that comprise Latina/o experiences as well as by challenging a binary view of race and racism that is limited to a Black/White experience (Solorzano, Yosso,

2000).[5] It is important to note that gender is not centrally included in the definition of Critical

Race Theory; although gender is mentioned when CRT discusses the importance of

intersectionality, there does not seem to be a specific enough focus on gender that acknowledges

the importance of gender equally with race. This dissertation makes a significant intervention in

this area, as gender is a key component of my analysis, and my study directly addresses this gap

in the existing research.

In addition to employing CRT and LatCrit Theory, I draw on the theory of community

cultural wealth. Community cultural wealth describes how the very qualities which are

dismissed and disqualified by dominant society as irrelevant and as deficits are the very

characteristics employed by minorities to empower themselves and outmaneuver the systems that

oppress them. Tara Yosso and Daniel G. Solorzano define community cultural wealth as the

survival mechanisms constructed by communities of color in response to discriminatory

institutions. More specifically, community cultural wealth is a variety of skills and knowledge

communities of color employ to resist forms of oppression (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso,

2006). It is also an accumulation of assets and resources found in communities of color that

challenge white middle class communities against which all other communities are formed

(Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2006).[6] In defining it in those terms, it transforms traditional

notions of cultural capital, and asserts that there are forms of capital people of color offer not

recognized by dominant society (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000). Critical Race Theory scholars have

---

[5] Such as the experience of immigration, or the effects of phenotype and the complexities of how phenotype affects
the Latina/o experience.

[6] One example of community cultural wealth is linguistic capital. For example, a child who is asked to be a
"cultural broker" for monolingual Spanish speaking or immigrant parents develops negotiation and communication
skills that are not necessarily valued by traditional definitions of cultural capital. However, community cultural
wealth would argue that these are skills that Latina/o students possess and will assist and support them in navigating
educational settings. These skills can accumulate over time as they move through the educational pipeline, these
skills can be cumulative.

formed various classifications for different forms of community cultural wealth. CRT argues that communities of color provide cultural wealth through 1) aspirational capital, or aspirations in the form of dreams and goals for the future, 2) navigational capital, or the perseverance to navigate through spaces or institutions not designed to support people of color or not created with communities of color in mind, 3) linguistic capital, or the value of knowing more than one language and the skills developed from being multilingual, 4) resistant capital, or the knowledge gained through oppositional behavior designed to challenge inequalities, 5) familial capital, or familial connections and pedagogies of the home, and 6) social capital, or the use of social networks to obtain support (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006).

Community cultural wealth applies to Latina doctoral programs in the aspirations and dreams that drive them to pursue and complete the Ph.D., in the ways in which family plays a role supporting and inspiring them in their journey (Burciaga, 2007; Espinoza, 2001; Gandara, 1995), in the skills gained through practicing oppositional behavior in response to inequalities faced in the doctorate (Burciaga, 2007; Gonzalez, 2006; Watford, 2007), and in the use of social networks to manage the graduate school experience (Burciaga, 2007; Watford, 2007). Navigational capital is particularly salient to the discussion of Latinas in graduate school in my research. The idea of navigational capital draws on the concept of invulnerability, or the ability to navigate through racially hostile campuses while maintaining high academic achievement. Navigational capital also draws on resilience, or a set of inner resources or social competencies and strategies that allow individuals to survive and recover from these experiences. Finally, this form of capital is influenced by one's social location by acknowledging the social networks that allow individuals to navigate through unfriendly terrain (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006). These conceptions of navigational capital apply to Latinas in academia, as they

7

describe the many mechanisms Latinas employ in response to the challenges faced in graduate programs. CRT discusses how living in the margins "nurtures ways of being and communicating that are counterhegemonic" (Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006, p.125). This translates into the Latina graduate experience in the forms of resistance exercised by them in order to persevere and succeed through seemingly insurmountable odds (Burciaga, 2007; Gonzalez, 2006; Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006).

As mentioned previously, I hypothesize that some Latinas may experience a "cooling out" of their professorate career goals during the Ph.D. My research will draw and expand on the concept of the "cooling out function". Originally coined by Irving Goffman as "cooling the mark out", it was adopted into theories of Education by Burton Clark. Goffman described "cooling the mark out" as the experience when "a person may be involuntarily deprived of his position or involvement and made in return something that is considered a lesser thing to be." He added, "A person may be involuntarily deprived of a role under circumstances which reflect unfavorably on his capacity for it" (Goffman, 1952, p.451). "Cooling the mark out" also includes a compromise by offering "the mark" an alternative that provides some semblance of the original position but is lesser in status. For example, "a lover may become a friend, a student of medicine may be asked to switch to the study of dentistry, a boxer may become a trainer" (Goffman, 1952, p.457). In other words, the new position may feel like a "consolation prize" that is certainly not worth the same as the original goal or prize. A significant element in this theory is Goffman's observation that "the mark" is conned into taking the lesser position, as they are not fully aware of the dynamic that is occurring and how they have been pushed into the inferior position through factors out of their control, and how they have lost something in the process. "Cooling the mark out" can certainly apply to my theorization of the Latina doctoral

socialization experience and its effects on post-doctoral professional aspirations. Do some Latinas choose alternative career goals due to messages they receive within the Ph.D. that they are not worthy of scholarly positions in Research Intensive Institutions? How are these goals viewed in regard to social status and social mobility? Are Latinas who are "cooled out" pushed into "alternative" positions due to dynamics beyond their control, and are they aware of this?

Burton R. Clark described Goffman's concept of "cooling the mark out" as how the disappointment of expectations is handled by the disappointed person (Clark, 1960, 1980). However, Clark's interpretation of this dynamic, termed the "cooling out function" has more popularly been utilized in Education community college literature to describe lowering student aspirations from higher education degree attainment to terminal vocational education, or abandoning higher education goals altogether. The "cooling out function" is an insidious tracking mechanism within the community college that perpetuates social inequalities (Herrideen, 1998). More specifically, the "cooling out function" describes the experience many students of color, women, and working class students face of entering the community college with aspirations of transferring to 4-year universities and obtaining a Bachelor's degree, but being dissuaded and deterred from doing so by multiple institutional factors. Various elements at the community college, such as poor academic counseling, testing that places students in "remedial" tracks, subtle and not so subtle pressures to pursue a 2-year terminal degree, distant or discouraging faculty, and a strong focus on vocational degrees, all function to dissuade underrepresented students from going on to the 4-year university (Clark, 1960, 1980; Herrideen, 1998; Rivas, Perez, Alvarez, Solorzano, 2007). By virtue of their social identities, these students are not seen as worthy or possessing the potential to transfer to four-year universities, and are both overtly and insidiously tracked away from the route to transfer (Clark, 1960, 1980; Rivas,

Perez, Alvarez, Solorzano, 2007). In essence, their dreams of obtaining a Bachelor's degree from a four-year university are "cooled out". Clark also describes several features of the "cooling out function" that can be applied to other similar settings, including alternative achievement, gradual disengagement to original goal, objective denial, agents of consolation, and avoidance of standards. Finally, similar to "cooling the mark out", a significant aspect of the "cooling out function" is the "importance of concealment" by the institution, or the ability of the institution to keep this dynamic fairly insidious and less than obvious to a general public or the person experiencing being "cooled out" (Clark, 1960, 1980).

In this dissertation, I argue that the features of being "cooled out" may directly apply to the Latina doctoral experience. I employ the concept of the "cooling out function" as a theoretical tool to describe how it applies to the experience of Latinas within doctoral programs. Specifically, I illustrate how the "cooling out function" applies to many Latinas who enter the Ph.D. route with goals of becoming academics within Research Intensive Institutions, but through overt and insidious factors are forced to reconsider their original career goals and paths, and are thereby "cooled out". Structural and institutional mechanisms such as lack of specialized mentorship, lack of institutional support, and isolation play a role in "the cooling out function" for Latinas in the doctorate. A key question explored in this study is: if Latinas in the Ph.D. are "cooled out", how does this function as an internal tracking mechanism within the doctorate which maintains social inequalities and maintains the low number of Latina faculty members in Research Intensive Institutions?

My dissertation is interdisciplinary in nature, as I utilize not only theoretical frameworks in the field of Education, but also theoretical frameworks from the discipline of Women's and Gender Studies. One significant feminist of color analysis that I will draw from is Gloria

10

Anzaldúa's theory of "third space" to describe how Latinas experience marginality within the doctoral process, and the sources of resistance they employ in response. Anzaldúa defines "third space" as the negotiating of boundaries as part of the everyday lived experiences of Chicanas. This negotiation of boundaries allows Chicanas to develop a "facultad", or a particular angle of vision, that enables them to develop an acute awareness as a survival tactic (Anzaldúa, 1987). Thus, in constantly being in a position of straddling multiple identities and never fully belonging, women of color develop a form of cultural sensitivity that arms them with the ability to view and analyze social institutions and interactions with an intuitive sense. In functioning within an institution that isn't necessarily welcoming of Latinas, I explore how the doctoral process may require them to occupy a "third space."

I also incorporate a feminist analysis of agency in my discussion. As described by Sabah Mahmood in Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject, the concept of agency is useful in exploring "how women contribute to reproducing their own domination," and how they resist or subvert it (Mahmood, 2005, p.6). Agency is also defined by Mahmood as "the capacity to realize one's own interest against the weight of custom, tradition, transcendental will, or other obstacles (whether individual or collective)" (Mahmood, 2005, p.7).[7] I am interested in utilizing the concept of agency within my research to discuss the process of decision-making Latinas engage in when making post-doctoral career choices and examine how empowered they feel in this process. More specifically, I will discuss how conscientious they are in regards to their positions within the institution as women of color, and how aware they are of the ways their identities impact their doctoral experiences and the choices they have and make upon completing

---

[7] I have chosen Mahmood's definition of agency, as she challenges Western notions of power and provides an alternative lens with which to understand feminine agency that is often overlooked by Western feminist perspectives.

11

the Ph.D. Additionally, Mahmood's definition of agency speaks to my research in "…what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency- but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment" (Mahmood, 2005, p.15). This definition assists me in theorizing how Latinas Ph.D.'s make career choices and how these decisions are an exercise of power for them. For example, some choices may be seen as inferior or less favorable from an outsider perspective, but may actually be illustrating a form of agency in the process. In occupying a unique position in their doctoral trajectories, the choices they make may need to be theorized within their experiences of subordination and resistance to it within the Ph.D.

Dolores Delgado Bernal and Daniel G. Solorzano describe a form of agency in their discussion of internal resistance.[8] They define internal resistance as behaviors by a student that may appear to "conform to institutional or cultural norms and expectations," when in reality, "students are consciously engaging in a critique of oppression" (Solorzano, Bernal, 2001, p.324). They provide an example of transformational resistance in a student of color that is critical of oppression, but chooses to enter higher education as a form of activism in the long-term desire to utilize that degree to give back to their community. From an outsider perspective, the choice to attend graduate school may be seen as conforming to societal standards, but internally, they are in fact practicing a form of resistance (Solorzano, Bernal, 2001). This discussion of resistance and power within choices will certainly apply to my research with Latinas in doctoral programs

---

[8] The discussion of internal resistance is within the analysis of transformational resistance. Transformational resistance is described as resistance that is "political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible" (Solorzano, Bernal, 2001, p.320). Within transformational resistance, there is internal and external resistance. External resistance is a more overt behavior that visibly illustrates engaging in acts of resistance, such as participating in a boycott or rally.

and the career paths they follow. One example of this may be seen in the Ph.D. graduate who

chooses a career at a non-profit organization in order to work with her community, as opposed to

pursuing the professorate. This choice may be seen as negative or inferior by academics, but to

this student, she is practicing an internal form of resistance and agency.

This dissertation also provides a powerful contribution in offering a nuanced feminist of

color analysis. One of my critiques of Critical Race Theory in Education and Latina/o Critical

Theory (LatCrit) is the lack of in-depth gendered analysis. I argue that CRT falls short in

successfully providing an intersectional approach; gender is subsumed under race in discussing

the experiences of Latinas in education. My hope is to examine how multiple identities of

Latinas and the intersection of these identities play a significant role in how they experience the

doctorate and the career choices they make post- Ph.D. In my research, I work to incorporate an

intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1991). Kimberle Crenshaw defines intersectionality as how

> "The experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting
> patterns of racism and sexism, and these experiences tend not to be represented
> within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism. Because of their
> intersectional identity as both women and of color within discourses that are
> shaped to respond to one or the other, women of color are marginalized with
> both" (Crenshaw, 1991, pp.1243-1244).

In order to truly understand the Latina trajectory within the Ph.D., it is crucial to engage in a

discussion of how multiple identities impact the doctoral experience, being careful not to focus

on one aspect of their identity (such as race, gender, sexuality, class) and thereby ignoring other

aspects that are also playing a role in how they move through the doctorate.

Literature Review

The field of Critical Race Theory in Education (CRT), as well as Latina/o Critical Race

Theory (LatCrit), has produced emerging research describing the doctoral experiences of Latinas

in academia. Over the past twenty years, this area of study has been slowly growing, and the

13

voices of Latinas from the Ph.D. are gradually being heard. This literature is powerful, as it begins to provide a glimpse into the Ph.D. experience for Latinas.

The Latina graduate experience is often characterized by the forms of resistance they must exercise in order to persevere through seemingly insurmountable odds. There has been an increasing amount of academic work documenting this resistance (Bañuelos, 2006; Burciaga, 2007; Espinoza, 2001; Gonzalez, 2006; Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006). Through both qualitative and quantitative studies, as well as personal accounts from scholars of their own journeys in navigating academia, this research has described a few of the strategic tools Latinas have utilized to survive in academic spaces. One common denominator in much of this literature is the realization by women of color that the institution is not serving their needs, that there is an absence of policies that support Latinas in doctoral programs, followed by the awareness that in order to make it, they will need to take matters into their own hands (Bañuelos, 2006; Burciaga, 2007; Espinoza, 2001; Gonzalez, 2006; Watford, Rivas, Burciaga, Solorzano, 2006). It is important to acknowledge that there does exist academic literature describing some positive experiences Latinas have had within the Ph.D. process. Not all Latinas describe their doctoral experience as largely unpleasant or oppressive. The literature in this field also reports some positive relationships with mentors and colleagues and does describe the nurturing of peers through the presence of spaces that supported them as graduate students, although these seem to be described as exceptions (Bañuelos, 2006; Burciaga, 2007; Watford, 2007). Even within historically oppressive institutions, there often seemed to be at least a few positive figures within the Ph.D. that enabled Latinas to complete their doctorates successfully.

Academic socialization and what that entails is often cited as a significant factor in how Latinas experience higher education. Juan Carlos Gonzalez describes the academic socialization

of Latina doctoral students and the conflicts that emerge within this process in his study

"Academic Socialization Experiences of Latina Doctoral Students: A Qualitative Understanding

of Support Systems That Aid and Challenges That Hinder the Process" (Gonzalez, 2006). He

examines how this socialization contributes to the success or failure of Latina doctoral students

and how ethnicity, gender and class affect their survival in higher education. Gonzalez has

various definitions of academic socialization, but draws on Paulo Freire's concept of

prescription, or "the imposition of the oppressor's choices over those of the oppressed for the

purposes of transforming the consciousness of the oppressed" to describe the academic

socialization of Latinas in higher education (Gonzalez, 2006, p.348). In his study, he

interviewed 13 Latinas attending Ph.D. programs in a predominantly white campus who had

been in their program for at least three years. The majority of the women described a common

experience of tokenism within their department, including being expected to be an expert on all

minority affairs, as well as facing double standards in terms of expectations to perform. For

example, many of the women reported being told directly or indirectly that they needed to do

twice the work and be twice as good as their white colleagues in order to survive the academy.

However, the main critique participants had was the experience of academic socialization, or as

Gonzalez defines it, the perceived expectations that all students fit the same mold based on a

white male middle-class prototype (Gonzalez, 2006). This expectation can be quite

disempowering for Latinas in the academy, as they are being asked to embrace and emulate ways

of thinking and forms of conduct that silence their own lived realities and perspectives.

Therefore, in response to rather uncomfortable if not impossible expectations, some of the

women in his research responded with resistance. In his analysis, Gonzalez differentiates

between "successful" and "unsuccessful" resistance within his participants. The "successful"

resistors were those that were able to find similar-minded colleagues who supported and encouraged them. Having likeminded individuals nearby minimized feelings of isolation in the department. In order to achieve success in their programs, they also adopted a mentality of having something to prove (Gonzalez, 2006). The participants became determined to demonstrate they were equally as capable as their white and/or male peers, as well as to prove naysayers, (including racist and sexist faculty and colleagues), wrong. For some, this motivation was so powerful that it became a significant impetus for completing their Ph.D.'s. Gonzalez argues that when students resisted academic socialization, they either found or lost their academic voice, and "for the politically savvy Latinas, playing the academic game was empowering" (Gonzalez, 2006, p.360). When they found their voice, this intellectual rejuvenation made them want to remain in academia past their Ph.D. and become career academics (Gonzalez, 2006).

I am interested in Gonzalez's definition of "successful" resistance, as I find his analysis a bit shallow and underdeveloped. He does not really elaborate on what "finding their academic voice" entails for the participants in the study. Does this mean making any compromises in the process? In finding allies and personal motivation, did this provide enough of a cushion against the normative and oppressive academic socialization in their department? Does Gonzalez define success as being able to turn a blind eye to those who make the journey difficult and stay focused on the end goal of achieving the Ph.D.? Is success being able to find ways to forge relationships with mentors that may or may not align with their academic goals and beliefs? This information would provide for a much more insightful study and more effectively inform this field of literature.

In Gonzalez's study, "unsuccessful" resistors were those who faced isolation and marginalization from colleagues and mentors as a result of their resistance (Gonzalez, 2006). For example, participants understood that departmental social events were a space to network with colleagues and faculty, forge connections, and be visible within the department. They fully grasped that this is where a significant portion of the academic socialization occurs. Some described these events as spaces where racial and gender microaggressions[9] were quite common, and where they often walked away feeling uncomfortable, inadequate, and frustrated. As a result, some made a conscious choice to completely avoid these events in order to prevent the discomfort associated with them. Unfortunately, not being as visible in the department sometimes became interpreted as being disengaged from the academic process, as being unmotivated, being uncooperative, and therefore as being "unsuccessful" graduate students (Gonzalez, 2006).

For some women in the study, another response to facing negative racial and gender climates was to switch to another program that seemed less hostile or oppressive. These women reported feeling that it was simply impossible for them to thrive within the first department and maintain their emotional sanity. Some also developed a hatred for academia and the Ph.D. process, and were hoping to eventually finish the Ph.D. and move away from a scholarly career. For them, there was no space for Latinas to function within the academy, and they were not willing to make the sacrifices they would need to in order to try to fit in (Gonzalez, 2006). How "successful" and "unsuccessful" resistance is defined is again salient here. One perspective is

---

[9] Microaggressions are defined as subtle, innocuous, conscious or non-conscious racial or gendered put downs that may be verbal or nonverbal. Individual microaggressions may appear harmless, but experiencing them regularly adds up to affect the person experiencing the microaggressions in the form of stress and diminished confidence. The person experiencing the microaggressions is also placed in the position of interpreting the insult and determining whether to respond back (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009). There are different types of microaggressions, including interpersonal racial microaggressions, racial jokes as microaggressions, and institutional microaggressions (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009).

that switching academic programs is a failure, as somehow a negative reflection on the student, as it illustrates an inability to persevere. Another is that it is a setback, as it requires having to start over in another department. I would argue that perhaps switching an academic program is in itself a form of resistance, as it illustrates the ability to acknowledge limitations and act in order to ensure the best personal result possible as a form of navigational capital.

Overall, Gonzalez's study describes the experiences of Latinas in graduate programs without truly exploring how race and gender affect their interactions in specific detail. He provides vague descriptions and generalizations without going into a deep analysis. For example, besides tokenism, how does the experience of being a *woman of color*, not just a person of color and not just a woman, make certain academic spaces less than welcoming? For instance, do the women experience sexual harassment, covert or obvious, from male peers or faculty? Do they experience racism from the white female colleagues and faculty? If so, what does this look like? How is gender *coupled with race* tied to expectations that Latinas have to work twice as hard to prove they are worthy of being in the academy? How do "politically savvy Latinas," as he describes those that are able to play the academic game "well," negotiate their gendered and racial identity?

One study that does incorporate both race and gender into its analysis and provides a discussion of community cultural wealth is Esthela Bañuelos' article "Here They Go Again with the Race Stuff: Chicana Negotiations of the Graduate Experience." In this article, she explores how the experiences of Chicanas in graduate programs can provide insight into how institutional exclusion occurs, as well as how this exclusion fuels Chicana resistance. Bañuelos' work incorporates a feminist of color analysis by employing Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of "third space" (Anzaldúa, 1987) to describe how Chicanas are marginalized in multiple ways within higher

18

education, and the sources of resistance they employ in response (Bañuelos, 2006). In her study, Bañuelos conducted interviews with 5 Chicanas enrolled in doctoral programs at University of California campuses in varying stages of their program. The women varied from working to middle-class, two of them were the first in their families to attend college, and all of them grew up speaking Spanish or both Spanish and English at home. In their interviews, all of the women shared that they did not feel a part of an "academic community" on their campus, all described witnessing racist remarks by colleagues on regular basis, and all spoke of constantly feeling inadequate within their program. In response to facing unwelcoming academic climates, the participants forged coalitions with other women of color in order to create community and resist institutional exclusion. For example, one participant created a reading group that she found useful in finding support to help her navigate the graduate school experience. In the reading group, the students assisted each other by reading and editing each other's work, sharing literature, and providing a sounding board for academic concerns. They also shared information such as departmental expectations, how to approach qualifying exams, which faculty members were supportive to minorities, and how to form a doctoral committee successfully (Bañuelos, 2006). These are all tools and information that are necessary to thrive in graduate programs. However, just as the process of applying to graduate school consists of unwritten rules, this is information that is not always readily available to all. Without proper mentorship or without being connected to colleagues "in the know," it is very easy for a student to make all of the wrong choices and struggle in the process. It is not uncommon for Latinas to be the ones left out of the loop and to find themselves blindly trying to figure out the rules of the game. This participant understood she was in an institution that did not serve the needs of women of color, and felt she should forge relationships with allies in order to get what she needed. The reading

group is an example of navigational resistance in that it created an academic space that could nurture Latinas and give them the mechanisms to have a fighting chance to succeed. The reading group also functioned in shifting the politics of their department by empowering incoming women of color to be better armed to resist exclusion. As doctoral students with the presumable intent to continue to be a part of academia in the future and have long successful scholarly careers, they worked towards integrating themselves within a structure that has historically excluded Latinas, but did so by finding ways around the insidious racism and sexism within the academy (Bañuelos, 2006).

The process of building an academic community as a form of navigational resistance moves beyond simply trying to create a supportive academic space. CRT scholars argue that Latino/a students build a sense of community in academic and social counterspaces that represent the cultural wealth of their home communities. Daniel Solorzano and Octavio Villalpando assert that "Latina/o students' resilience depends on their ability to draw on cultural knowledge, skills, and contacts from their home communities. They cultivate community cultural wealth in academic counterspaces, such as study groups and student-organized study halls" (Solorzano, Villalpando, 1998, p.214). Additionally, social counterspaces often develop out of academic ones, and vice versa. The women in Bañuelos' study also found social connections within their reading group, and were able to find cultural validation and support in the process (Bañuelos, 2006).

In facing multiple challenges in the doctoral experience, sheer strength and persistence can go a long way. However, where this strength is acquired is notable for Latinas in the academy. The role of culture and family are important in this discussion. The study "Chicanas Holding Doctoral Degrees: Social Reproduction and Cultural Ecological Approaches" explores

why some Mexican-American women from low-income backgrounds have attained success within higher education. In their research with 100 Chicanas who have obtained doctorates, Shirley Achor and Aida Morales found that one factor in succeeding in graduate school was tied to how women responded to discrimination, both over and discreet. As with most studies conducted with Latinas in higher education, the majority of participants reported experiences of discrimination, racism and condescension as central to their graduate school experience. Many of the participants reported facing low expectations by advisors and facing racist attitudes by professors. Yet, this study provides a different language for describing forms of resistance practiced by these women. Achor and Morales found that "persistence and challenge to discrimination rather than intimidation" was a significant predictor of their success (Achor, Morales, 1990). Instead of backing down and allowing themselves to be controlled by the racism they encountered, they actively worked to reassert their position in their doctoral programs. Achor and Morales argue that a factor in their participants' success was their ability to develop "resistance with accommodation," or "a mode of resistance that rejects and challenges existing power relationships but accepts the institutionally approved means of attaining educational advancement" (Achor, Morales, 1990, p.287). For example, participants actively contested the barriers they encountered and rejected messages of their unworthiness. Therefore, instead of internalizing the idea that they were unworthy of being in their academic programs, they actively rationalized these messages as simply being symptoms of the sexist and racist nature of the institution (Achor, Morales, 1990).

Achor and Morales note that the women in this study found the inner strength from their supportive families to externalize attacks on their abilities. Many of these students had similar backgrounds that armed them with the skills and confidence to be able to engage in "resistance

21

with accommodation." Most of the participants reported being products of families that encouraged educational attainment that instilled a strong sense of self-worth, a will to succeed, and high levels of aspiration and motivation. Although a majority of their families were from low-income and often uneducated backgrounds, they were very instrumental in providing them with the vision and perseverance to pursue higher education (Achor, Morales, 1990). Without the understanding of the power of education and the encouragement by their families to have high academic goals, these women might have found it easier to buckle under the pressure to quit, as well as internalize messages of unworthiness.

One significant strand of this field of research examines the characteristics of Latinas who have succeeded in getting to Ph.D. programs despite possessing traits that would have predicted they would not achieve academic success, much less make it to the Ph.D. level. Patricia Gandara's groundbreaking work <u>Over the Ivy Walls: The Educational Mobility of Low-Income Chicanos</u>, studies the high achievement found in Mexican-Americans who came from low-income homes with very little formal education (Gandara, 1995). Her research examined the causes of their academic success despite the bleak circumstances these students came from. <u>Over the Ivy Walls</u> illustrates how the strength for resistance exhibited by Latinas in higher education is often instilled in them by their families. The common denominator in Gandara's findings was the students' upbringing and the messages they received regarding the value of education. All of the participants in the study described their parents as models of a strong work ethic, as being the hardest working people they knew. Most of the students had large families, and also cited their siblings as a significant resource in serving as role models and encouraging their aspirations. One notable finding was the presence of a family "myth," or a narrative that described their family immigration story. The stories would often describe how their families

had been better off financially in their home countries, and how their ancestors were much more successful in the past. These "myths" were significant for several reasons, as they made students feel that if their ancestors were successful, they too were capable and worthy of achieving success in the future. The myths created a "culture of possibility" for them, allowing them to believe in the possibility of success and enabling them to believe that they did not have to struggle like their parents struggled (Gandara, 1995). The drive for social mobility was also a source of strength for the students. Many of the participants described the desire to move out of poverty and have a better life than their parents did as a motivator to succeed. Most of the participants saw themselves "as extremely hard workers who believed in the promise that anything was possible with hard work," (Gandara, 1995, p.113) a belief which fueled them when resisting the oppression they faced in their graduate programs.

Though the families in Gandara's study had limited resources and all of the students' parents had limited education, most of the participants described the presence of educational tools in their homes. Almost all of the students had encyclopedias and dictionaries growing up, and many had daily newspapers delivered to their houses. Their parents also helped their children with homework whenever they could or possessed the academic ability. What was perhaps most notable in Gandara's work was her finding that mothers were significant cheerleaders in their children's educational pursuits. Their mothers provided them with a model of strong independent women and instilled a desire for independence within them (Gandara, 1995). Again, the model of hard-working motivated women served to inspire Latinas in managing the obstacles they faced in higher education (Gandara, 1995). Gandara's work is also significant in that it challenges a cultural deficit framework often placed on Latina/os in education. The cultural deficit framework is the erroneous belief held by educators that Latinos

are culturally less motivated to pursue education because education is not valued in Latino cultures. This framework allows the blame for lack of educational achievement to be placed on students and culture, as opposed to holding educational institutions accountable (Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000). Additionally, this framework argues that the cultural values learned in communities of color can actually be detrimental to student success (Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000).

The role and influence of family in the Latina graduate school experience is significant. At times the demands of family can conflict with the demands of graduate school. Roberta Espinoza examines this tension in her study of Latinas in graduate programs in Northern California. "The Good Daughter Dilemma" explores exactly how Latinas negotiate multiple and conflicting obligations through the use of diverse strategies, particularly focusing on how the women balance familial connections and duties with graduate program demands. Within Latina/o culture, the value of family, also known as *familismo*, or loyalty to family above all else, is quite significant. However, for a student in a doctoral program, this can both serve as a source of strength as well as sometimes pose a challenge. Graduate programs demand a great deal of students' time and require that scholars place the academy and their scholarly work above all other priorities. An experience that was often cited by Latinas in Espinoza's study was the feeling of being torn between the responsibilities of school and family. Participants worried they would be seen as irresponsible or not truly dedicated to their studies if they favored family over their studies. However, they also feared being seen as disrespectful or disloyal by their family if they prioritized their studies. Espinoza labeled one particular group of students in her study as "integrators." The "integrators" managed family expectations by being very explicit with them about the duties they faced in school. These women had conversations with their parents

regarding the scholarly demands placed on them, and explained why at times they might be forced to prioritize school over family (Espinoza, 2001). This was useful in making it clear to family that if there were duties or events that might take second priority, it was not due to them being bad daughters, but due to their educational duties. Integrators also shared their experiences with family in order to elicit emotional support in their academic endeavors. For example, one student described how her mother took care of her during her oral exam process by cooking meals, helping with household duties, and providing encouragement (Espinoza, 2001). Espinoza argues that the integrator strategy of resistance blends being a good daughter with being a good student. She asserts that the integrators are highly bicultural in being able to integrate family and school and manage their ethnic identity within each cultural context by being able to exhibit "appropriate" role behaviors in the Latino home culture as well as in their Anglo school culture (Espinoza, 2001). The "integrators" in Espinoza's study exhibited an ability to negotiate multiple worlds and balance conflicting demands by clearly communicating their needs. Their communication skills not only aided them in striking a balance, but also allowed them to garner emotional support from their families.

Espinoza's analysis of "integrators" could be expanded further on several levels. It is important to note that all of the participants in her study were not married and did not have children. This does not take away from the familial obligations Latinas face from parents and extended family. However, I would imagine utilizing this "integrator" strategy may be more challenging when also having to manage having children and a spouse. Would this strategy be as effective for married and non-married students with children, or how would it need to be adjusted accordingly? Also, challenges such as family illness or financial hardships are much more difficult to navigate by simply explaining away the demands of the academy. In these

circumstances, it seems Latinas are point-blank forced to choose between their education and their family. Additionally, her analysis points to a central underlying issue within the academy, the infrastructure that is primarily based on a white male middle-class cultural model. By arguing that these women are bicultural in their ability to negotiate their ethnicity based on context, Espinoza points to the inflexibility of the academy, and the sacrifices it requires of women of color in order to fit into the "Anglo-school culture." Instead of asking Latinas to assimilate to this culture, perhaps the research should be examining how they can infiltrate it and eventually change it. Conversely, her discussion of "integrators" is an example of familial capital, a form of community cultural wealth. Through the support and encouragement of their families, Espinoza's participants were better equipped to navigate the doctoral journey (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006).

There have been two dissertations written in the past few years that truly inform my work and that I wish to build on with my own research. Tara Watford's and Rebeca Burciaga's dissertations explore different aspects of the doctoral experience for women of color, and how it affects post-doctorate aspirations. Tara Watford's dissertation, "Looking Beyond Equal Representation: Perspectives in Gender Equity from the New Majority in Doctoral Education," describes how the number of women in academia has increased dramatically in the last twenty years. Yet, despite the increased representation of women in the academy, she finds that academic culture has not necessarily adapted in order to account for this change (Watford, 2007). One remarkable finding in this study was the lack of family-friendly environments within graduate programs, even as the departments were ones where women were the majority. For example, Watford found that participants faced "the silent treatment" when it came to discussions around these issues, no one talked about how to strike the balance between familial

obligations and academic ones (Watford, 2007, p.147). In fact, many of the women felt a

general sense of discouragement in starting a family while in graduate school, as it was seen as

necessarily interfering with future scholarly success. Additionally, many of the participants felt

frustration at the lack of role models of female faculty members in modeling how to achieve a

balance between academic work and a family life. Participants reported feeling that faculty often

took the stance of "I made it, so you can too," in regards to finding this balance (Watford, 2007,

p.142). Thus, instead of finding allies in female faculty in their departments, they in fact faced

judgment and pressure from the very people they hoped would be supportive. For many of the

women of color in the study, they also faced a lack of understanding that they might be facing

demands from extended family to be caregivers. For instance, when students attempted

explaining the sense of obligation they had to their families, they reported being dismissed and

belittled by faculty (Watford, 2007). Watford's findings are notable for various reasons. In an

academic department where there is a larger presence of women, the assumption would perhaps

be that women would have a greater understanding and compassion regarding the experiences of

other women, particularly as relating to familial duties. However, much like participants in

male- or white-dominated departments, their gendered and cultural needs were largely ignored

even in programs where female faculty were better represented numerically. Just as this occurs

in traditional male-dominated academic programs, the expectation was that academic obligations

come before all personal or family obligations (Watford, 2007). This begs the question, is an

increased number of women, and specifically, women of color in the academy, really changing

and improving the face of academia? Or are the very same women who felt oppressed within

their own academic journeys blindly reproducing these experiences for other women of color?

Is it even possible to really have "empowering" graduate programs that meet the needs of Latinas? When asked about graduate school, the participants in Watford's study described their experiences as "fraught with ambiguity," and the women discussed feeling disillusionment with their assimilation into the academy (Watford, 2007, p.80). Additionally, when asked about the gender and racial climate of their programs, the women had difficulty describing their dissatisfaction, but many discussed feeling they were only being showcased as tokens in their departments for being able to claim departmental diversity (Watford, 2007). Additionally, women of color described experiencing barriers to normative factors that support career development and socialization in doctoral programs. Watford's findings illustrate how the infrastructure of the academy is deeply influenced by a gender and racial discriminatory culture. The scholarly socialization path is laden with unspoken rules and pathways to success. Without adequate mentors and supportive faculty to help guide them through the process, women of color are basically excluded from academic circles. Watford argues that participants' unhappiness with the normative socialization process speaks to how gender and racial climates operate in subtle and hidden ways. Thus, gender equity measures that simply focus on the retention and recruitment of women do not ensure a more "friendly" environment for women, and especially for women of color (Watford, 2007, p.77).

The effects of many of these less-than-empowering experiences for women of color in graduate school does influence their future career aspirations. Another significant finding in Tara Watford's study was that many women, particularly women of color, entered the academy with post Ph.D. aspirations to teach at Research Intensive Institutions. However, many subsequently shifted these aspirations to either work outside of the academy, or teach at less "prestigious" universities, such as community colleges or liberal arts colleges (Watford, 2007).

The majority of the women cited their experiences and the obstacles they faced in graduate school as a central factor in shifting aspirations. Women of color had the strongest doubts about working in a Research Intensive Institutions. Lack of diversity, lack of community, and isolation were all cited as factors in affecting their career goals. The politics and sacrifices women felt they would need to make in order to really succeed in the academy made them question their original academic goals. Additionally, they felt that the problems they experienced in doctoral education foreshadowed their future careers. Interestingly, the majority of the participants felt that the assumption from faculty was that they would in fact aspire to work in Research Intensive Institutions, and they faced general disapproval when they expressed otherwise, and were not able to access adequate career guidance in regards to options outside of academia. In fact, some of the women hid their non-academic career aspirations from faculty and colleagues for fear of facing negative consequences. For these women, the mentality of "just finish and get out" was quite prevalent (Watford, 2007, p.114). Watford's work inspires my own research, in that I would like to hone in on the question of how often this dynamic of disenchantment with the academy and wanting to "finish and get out" occurs, particularly for Latinas (Watford, 2007, p.114). Watford's work begins to describe this phenomenon, and I take it a step further and make it one of the central questions of my research.

Rebeca Burciaga's dissertation "Chicana Ph.D. Students Living Nepantla: Educación and Aspirations Beyond the Doctorate" explores post-doctoral career aspirations. Her research examines the educational trajectories of Chicana Ph.D. students in the field of Education and their post-Ph.D. goals. Burciaga's work focuses on the childhood experiences and family dynamics that have influenced her participants' desire to attend doctoral programs, as well as how their upbringing armed them with the skills they use in navigating the sometimes

29

challenging Ph.D. (Burciaga, 2007). Burciaga's dissertation informs my own research in that she explores the factors that influence her participants' desire to continue in academia post-Ph.D. and go on to the professorate (Burciaga, 2007).[10]

Burciaga utilizes the theoretical concept of "conocimiento" to discuss her participants' paths to career aspirations. "Conocimiento" is a path people go through during times of self-discovery and change. The path begins with "a sudden, jolt-like recognition that something isn't right, a realization of imminent change" (Burciaga, 2007, p.88). "Conocimiento" takes an individual through various phases; it begins with a self-recognition, and passes through several other phases before reaching the last phase, the stage of action. The "jolt-like recognitions" or lessons learned which fueled her participants, were organized into three categories: personal, political, and intellectual factors. Personal factors included inspiration found through family such as familial pride in their academic achievements, working hard to help their families move out of poverty, and being inspired by the sacrifices their mothers made to support them during childhood. Political factors included issues such as dealing with racial and gender dynamics in graduate school (Burciaga, 2007). For example, similarly to Watford, one of the challenges many of her participants faced centered around balancing family and doctoral work, as well as the fear that this would only become increasingly difficult at the professorate level. She questions if the faculty structure is really designed for "family-free" people, and if some Chicanas "lose heart because of this" (Burciaga, 2007, p.54). I found this particularly significant, as it points to one of the potential conflicts women experience as they engage in decision-making regarding post-doctoral careers. Burciaga also found that her participants'

---

[10] My dissertation will focus more on the doctoral socialization process and will incorporate women who self-identify as Latina, not just Chicana. Additionally, my study will incorporate the voices of women from a variety of disciplines outside of the field of Education.

upbringing encouraged them to aspire beyond titles and prestige to pursue careers that would make an impact not only in their own lives, but in the lives of others. Finally, intellectual factors discuss schooling and the development of an individual's intellect (Burciaga, 2007).

Burciaga also describes some of the dynamics Chicanas faced during the doctorate in greater detail than many other studies have discussed. For example, students described competitive verbal posturing[11] by colleagues as one of the challenges they faced. They reported that this was more common with white students and some faculty. Burciaga also discussed some of the challenges of student-faculty relationships faced by participants, including having difficulty scheduling meetings with their advisors, not hearing from advisors for months at a time despite repeated attempts to contact them, as well as experiencing humiliation and verbal abuse at the hands of advisors. Some of the participants described the feeling that no matter how hard they tried, they could never succeed in the eyes of their advisors (Burciaga, 2007).

Burciaga's analysis is useful. My one critique of her project is that she focused her study within an Education department, a department where Chicanas tend to be more highly represented than other Ph.D. programs. Additionally, while useful in discussing the Chicana experience, I'm not certain that the concept of "conocimiento" as described by Burciaga would apply to Latinas in general. I feel the concept of "conocimiento" as she describes it is very culturally specific to Chicanas, and Latinas who don't identify as Chicanas may not connect to it.

In this dissertation, I explore a variety of doctoral programs, including Ph.D. programs where Latinas are a numerical minority, as well as where they are one of few Latinas in the program. My reasoning for this is that Latinas tend to be numerically underrepresented in the

---

[11] Competitive verbal posturing was described as utilizing academic language and disciplinary jargon as a way to prove or illustrate academic competency, as well as a way to intimidate colleagues. The use of verbal posturing was described as problematic when the failure to do so was seen as reflection of lack of academic prowess (Burciaga, 2007).

majority of doctoral programs, and numerical representation does make a difference in how

Latinas experience the doctoral process. Additionally, I will discuss in my methods sections, I

conducted research with women who self-identify as Latinas, intentionally expanding my

participant pool beyond women who self-identify as Chicana.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Methodology

"The researcher is responsible for the final version…she cannot avoid this responsibility" (Gorelick, 1991, p.469).

Qualitative data collection methods were utilized in my study to answer the following research questions: How do institutional and interpersonal factors affect Latina doctoral educational experiences in Research Intensive Institutions? How do these factors influence their pursuit of professional careers in the academy? How do Latina doctoral students in these Research Intensive Institutions respond to these institutional and interpersonal factors? This section will lay out the tools I employed for qualitative data collection and data analysis.

Participant Recruitment

Data collection for this study took place on various university campuses across the country, including public and private universities. My goal was to obtain participants from multiple campuses as opposed to one central campus in order to obtain a diversity of experiences and perspectives. I recruited ten participants from doctoral programs in a variety of disciplines within the Social Sciences and Humanities.[12] [13] I did not recruit participants from STEM fields. I chose to conduct research with women who are attending Research Intensive Institutions because doctoral students in these schools tend to be expected and are trained to go on to pursue the professorate at Research Intensive Institutions as well (Burciaga, 2007), and I believe this expectation may play a role in how students are socialized and in how their career aspirations are shaped.

---

[12] I do not specify the particular disciplines or doctoral departments of the participants in order to protect their anonymity.

[13] I'm aware that recruiting participants from both Social Science and Humanities may have affected the outcomes of my study as they may face different institutional issues due to the nature of their disciplines.

Participants for this study were also selected based on several additional criteria. In order to answer the types of questions I am researching, I focused the participant pool on women who self-identify as Latina, who have been in their doctoral programs for at least three years, and ideally, who have advanced to candidacy. I also included doctoral candidates and recent Ph.D. graduates who are entering various job markets, academic and non-academic, who have very recently done so (within the past one to two years).[14] In terms of demographics, I interviewed 12 women ages 20 to 60. In including women in their 20's and 30's, I was interested in incorporating women who may still be making decisions about childbearing, marriage, factors that influence career decision making.[15] Considering child bearing and partnering issues is crucial, as it is important to acknowledge how personal factors combine with professional factors in making post-doctoral career choices. The participant pool was open to women who vary in how they self-identify in terms of their sexuality, and women who are partnered, married, or single.

A purposive snowball sampling methodology was utilized to recruit participants for this study. Participants were recruited and identified for this study through e-mail listservs, social media (such as Facebook), flyers advertising the study, as well as by word of mouth publicizing the study in spaces where doctoral students converge.

Tools of Measurement

I employed two tools of measurement for data collection. The first stage of data collection was a short questionnaire to pre-screen potential participants for the study (APPENDIX 1). The questionnaire screened for information around doctoral enrollment, racial

---

[14] My intention in doing so is to include women who are beginning to explore their career options and who are currently in the job market.

[15] Women ages 21-34 are considered to be at the peak of their childbearing years (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

self-identification, years in doctoral program, as well as demographic and background data. The second stage of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews per participant with short, open-ended questions in order to explore an in-depth view of the participants' experience. I conducted in-person interviews, Skype, and phone interviews.[16] The interview guide examined educational background, pre-doctoral career aspirations, motivations for attending the Ph.D., how their doctoral program was chosen, experiences within the Ph.D., and post-doctoral career aspirations (APPENDIX 2). In discussing the experiences during the doctorate, I explored relationships with mentors, dynamics and interactions with colleagues, professional development opportunities, classroom dynamics, and negotiation of doctoral demands and personal obligations. Questions around post-doctoral career aspirations focused on their current career goals, how they arrived at their current goals, how they envision the professorate, and what the employment search and the job market has been like for those that have embarked on the professional job search. The interviews conveyed in their own voices what the participants envisioned themselves doing post-Ph.D. when they began their programs, what their doctoral process was like, what challenges they faced along the way in doctorate, how they have been nurtured as well, and what they currently see themselves doing post-Ph.D.[17] Although I used an interview guide to examine these issues, I designed the questions to allow for some flexibility in the conversation and allow participants to tell their story somewhat organically.

After I conducted the interviews, I followed up with participants by sending post-interview e-mails prompting participants to add any information they felt we did not cover

---

[16] Several of the interviews were with participants located long distances from me, and phone and skype interviews facilitated the data collection process.

[17] One additional issue I had to explore and acknowledge in my interview process is the nature of the economy and the lack of employment opportunities in this historical moment. The reality of a scarcity of employment options and the competitive nature of the academic employment application process may function as significant factor in influencing post-doctoral career aspirations.

during the interview, as well as clarify anything they felt wasn't conveyed clearly (Burciaga, 2007). Again, this provided another chance for participants to tell their story in their own voice and capture nuances that may have been lost during the interview process.[18]

All of the interviews were audio-taped. I wrote brief field notes during the interviews, and wrote more extensive field notes based on my observations and reflections directly after the interviews. As the participants of my study revealed personal information about their lives, as well as sensitive information about their doctoral educational experiences, it was important to protect the identity of the participants as well as what is shared during the interviews. The recordings of the interviews are stored in a locked cabinet and I am the only person that has access to them. In order to protect the privacy of the participants, all participants were given a pseudonym, and they also had the option of choosing a pseudonym of their liking.

Upon completing the interviews and email journaling of participants, the interviews were transcribed by myself. After the interviews were transcribed, the data was coded and organized into themes based on my research questions that emerge from the interviews. This assisted me in organizing the data and in analysis of the data collected. In order to protect the privacy of research participants, I also kept all of the transcriptions of the interviews in a locked cabinet that only I will be able to access.

Critical Race Theory and Feminist Methodology

In conducting research, I wanted to be conscientious about the forms of methodology I utilized and wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants in my dissertation are fully represented. I worked to follow the example of Critical Race Methodology, one that is focused on the empowerment of subordinated groups and "turn the margins into places of transformative

resistance" (Solorzano, Yosso, 2002, p.37). It is important to me to challenge the majoritarian stories that place privileged voices at the forefront of higher education and silence the experiences of people of color (Solorzano, Yosso, 2002).

In writing up the results and analysis, I chose to highlight the participants' narratives, utilizing an oral history model. My choice in utilizing oral histories for the methodology of this research was quite intentional. I was interested in capturing the nuances of the women's lived experiences within the doctorate and their educational journeys leading to the Ph.D. I wanted to avoid vague generalizations, and felt that providing the opportunity for participants to tell their own stories in detail would better capture the richness of their experiences and the complicated dynamics impacting their educational choices and opportunities. The use of oral history as a method for exposing contradictions, asking difficult questions, and providing a voice has long been utilized among women of color feminists and within Critical Race Theory.

My goal was also to incorporate elements of Testimonio in my research methods. As described by Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona, "The methodological concerns of testimonio are often around giving voice to silences, representing the other, reclaiming authority to narrate, and disentangling questions surrounding legitimate truth" (Bernal, Burciaga, Carmona, 2012, p.365). The intention of this dissertation was to do just that, to disentangle truths that are often kept silent in the experiences of Latinas within academia, to represent "the other" as a subject with power, to discuss the sometimes difficult and contradictory choices Latinas must make in the academy, to give voice to the silences based in isolation, racism, and exclusion experienced by many mujeres during the doctorate.

Employing feminist methodology was an important goal of mine in writing this dissertation. Feminist methodology can be defined as "a field of inquiry rooted in feminist

activism and in feminists' critiques of the standard procedures of social science" (Devault, 1996, p.29). According to Devault,

> Feminist methodologists do not use or prescribe any single research method; rather, they are united through various efforts to include women's lives and concerns in accounts of society, to minimize the harms of research, and to support changes that will improve women's status (Devault, 1996, p.29).

My objective in producing research about Latinas and their socialization experiences within the doctorate is to expose how gender and racial dynamics impact their ability to navigate and succeed within academia. It is to give a voice to a group of graduate students and scholars which are often overlooked or ignored within academia. As defined by Devault, the goal of feminist research is to "bring women in,…to find what has been ignored, censored, and suppressed, and to reveal both the diversity of actual women's lives and the ideological mechanisms that have made so many of those lives invisible" (Devault, 1996, p.30). How one carries out this research is significant. As a feminist researcher, how can I produce research that isn't just about women, but for women (Gorelick, 1991)?

Strengths and Limitations

Although my intentions were to utilize feminist methodology in participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis, this research, like any scholarly research, does have some limitations. One limitation is the deliberate omission of information that could compromise participants' anonymity. Due to the sensitive nature of this research, and the potential of exposing participants to backlash or criticism for sharing difficult or controversial experiences within academia, I needed to be very intentional in how much personal identifying information I included regarding participants. This meant omitting information such as specific names and locations of schools or programs attended, omitting names of faculty mentors, and even omitting participants' fields of study or disciplines in some cases. I wanted to ensure I did not put

participants in danger or potentially expose them to a situation that could be harmful to their

scholarly careers. Gorelick argues that

> The production of science is not an operation, it is a relationship. That relationship is exploitative when a researcher studies people for the benefit of a researcher's career, without any regard to any positive or negative effect to the people being studied (Gorelick, 1991, p.460).

While the goal of this dissertation is to in fact empower Latinas within academia by exploring

their experiences during the doctorate, it was essential that I completed this work while being

mindful of the potential negative impacts to participants. There were times when participants

would pause or self-edit or cut a thought short, perhaps for fear of being too explicit or

controversial. Cruz describes the need for educators to listen to "ethnographic silence" as a

means of protecting participants and learning to "listen for what is not being said" (Cruz, 2008.

P.67). This was a practice I certainly attempted to employ during data collection. As I heard

women tell their stories, I also tried to listen to what they were not able to say. "It is in these

interstitial spaces – the story that lies just underneath the student narrative-where a subtext of

careful disclosure is created" (Cruz, 2008, p.68).

My own positionality obviously impacted the research design, data collection, and

analysis of this dissertation. As a Latina, as an immigrant, as a Puerto Rican woman, as a light

skinned Latina, as a doctoral candidate within a research intensive institution, all of my identities

and experiences inevitably shaped how I approached this research, how I perceived participants'

narratives, and how I analyzed them. As argued by Gorelick, in conducting research, "the

researcher brings her social location, culture, motivations, limitations, ignorances, skills,

education, resources, familiarity with theory and methodology…and an outside perspective that

may be useful as well as troublesome" (Gorelick, 1991, p.469). My own experiences as a

doctoral student and my own doctoral socialization obviously played a role in my motivation to

produce this research. However, as I developed this project, I strove to be careful of how my bias impacted findings. Through the assistance of my doctoral advisor, I worked to maintain awareness and balance around this issue. The fact that I am a Latina doctoral candidate writing about the experiences of Latina doctoral students places me in the position Bernal, Burciaga and Carmona would describe as testimonialista, as I am both a researcher, but in some ways a participant of this work (Bernal, Burciaga, Carmona, 2012). Although it is impossible to be completely objective in conducting research, it is important I am aware of how my identity and experience may have an impact on how my research is conducted.

As mentioned briefly in the methods section, it is important to acknowledge the current challenging nature of the economy and how this may play a role in decision making regarding post-doctoral career aspirations. However, I feel that by incorporating this question into the interview guide and acknowledging the potential impact of this, it will be sufficient in correcting for this issue.

Structure of Dissertation

My dissertation is comprised of six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, including a brief overview of my project and my research questions. Chapter two is the literature review, and consists of a discussion of the existing research in the fields of Gender Studies and Education that have informed my own dissertation. In this chapter, I also include the theoretical frameworks I draw from in my research, such as "the cooling out function," feminist definitions of agency, and Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education. Chapter three consists of the research design, as well as a conversation about the mixed methods I have employed and why I chose to use those methods. For example, I include a discussion on feminist forms of data collection, and my intentional use of these methods in my work. Within this chapter, I also acknowledge my

role and positionality as a researcher, as well as the anticipated limitations of my project. Chapters four and five include my findings and analysis of the data I have collected. The discussion of my findings is organized around major themes that emerge from the data. Chapter six is the summary and conclusion of the dissertation. I discuss future directions and implications of my research within this chapter. Finally, I include appendices of data collection tools utilized in my dissertation in this chapter, such as the interview protocol, survey, and follow-up email questionnaire.

Conclusion

I believe that more detailed accounts of the Latina experience in the Ph.D. can provide greater insight as to how they choose their careers post Ph.D. My hope is that in continuing to provide insight into this field, we can change the face of the academy in order to create a more welcoming space for Latinas. More detailed accounts of the Latina experience in the Ph.D. can provide greater insight as to how they choose their careers post Ph.D. My hope is that in continuing to provide insight into this field, we can change the face of the academy in order to create a more welcoming space for Latinas. My work is significant as it examines how the doctoral experience for Latinas affects not only the formation of Latina academics, but their subsequent funneling, and sometimes lack thereof, into faculty positions at Research Intensive Institutions. As institutions where knowledge production occurs, "where "legitimate" knowledge is established" (Bernal, Villalpando, 2002, p.169), the presence of Latinas in Research Intensive Institutions is crucial in order to ensure they are represented in the forms of scholarly research produced. Additionally, the physical presence of Latinas on these campuses is important for undergraduate students of color in seeing women of color represented as faculty members. As argued by Daniel G. Solorzano and Tara Yosso, "If social justice is to become a reality, then we

must consider that those sitting behind the desks need the opportunity to see themselves in front of the classroom," (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000, P.58). Additionally, my research provides a powerful intervention by exploring the alternative career routes Latinas choose post Ph.D. when they opt not to go on to faculty positions at Research Intensive Institutions. Some of the current literature on the doctoral socialization process touches upon the expectations Ph.D. students face that the professorate, and particularly the professorate at Research Intensive Institutions, is the only honorable or respectable post-doctoral career option (Burciaga, 2007; Watford, 2007). Several studies briefly report that those doctoral students who express interest in alternative career routes are stigmatized and branded as less worthy of being mentored by faculty mentors (Burciaga, 2007; Watford, 2007). My research dissects the implicit hierarchies that exist within higher education which place Research Intensive Institutions as prestigious places of learning and teaching, and place others institutions or career routes (such as teaching colleges, non-profit organizations, or administrative career routes) as less than worthy of Ph.D. graduates. In exploring this hierarchy, I hope to re-examine how success is defined in the academy in regards to doctorate production and subsequent careers. My goal is to challenge the criteria of what makes a "successful" doctoral graduate of Research Intensive Institutions, as well as explore how Latinas reshape how success is defined in the Ph.D.[19] More specifically, I hope to challenge the perspective that doctoral graduates who choose not to teach and conduct research at Research Intensive Institutions have "failed" the Ph.D. production factory. Rather, I will illustrate how Latinas who obtain their doctoral degrees and utilize them in "alternative" careers may actually be illustrating a form of community cultural wealth and agency in their choices (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2006). I illustrate how these highly educated Latinas are utilizing the skills

---

[19] While also acknowledging the value of the presence of Latinas in Research Intensive Institutions.

and knowledge they obtained through their graduate education, as well as the navigational tools and forms of resistance they utilized in order to navigate the Ph.D. experience, to go on to other fields and enrich them with their skills.

My work provides significant contributions to the field of Critical Race Theory in Education, as well to the field of Gender Studies in several ways. As Latinas are already underrepresented in the academy, I argue that this underrepresentation is not an accident. My research examines how the process of being weeded out of the educational pipeline doesn't simply end with the low number of Latinas within doctoral programs, but also with the lack of representation of Latina faculty members in Research Intensive Institutions. This study explores how structural inequalities, such as institutional racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia within higher education affect Latinas not simply in their experience as doctoral students, but in influencing whether they go on to pursue careers as academics, and in what types of institutions they choose to achieve these goals.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS/ INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN STUDY

Educational Background/Introduction of Participants in Case Study

"At the time, I was working with what I had." –Brenda

How does the doctoral socialization process Latinas experience in Research Intensive Institutions impact their post-doctoral career goals? Are Latinas cooled out of the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions? What are the forms of resistance and navigational capital (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2006) do they employ to enter and complete the doctorate successful?

In this chapter, I will introduce the participants of this study and provide a brief oral history of their educational trajectories leading up to their doctoral experiences. Central to this discussion, I will illustrate their gendered and racialized experiences as Latinas entering prestigious Ph.D. programs within higher education. Additionally, in the section "Road to the Ph.D.," I will examine how the women in this study approached the doctoral application process. Specifically, I will examine the forms of access to information and resources they had in choosing their doctoral programs, and how access to information and guidance in the doctoral application process may have a correlation with the quality of support and mentorship they received once they entered the Ph.D. Some key characteristics of the participants of this study discussed in this chapter include 1) socio-economic background, 2) parental educational attainment, 3) whether parents were immigrants, or if they were first generation immigrants to the U.S., 4) profile of K-12 educational institutions attended, 5) profile of undergraduate institution, and 6) whether participants obtained a Master's Degree prior to pursuing a Ph.D. I highlighted these particular characteristics, as they all influence and inform the journey to the doctorate for the participants in this study.

Lily

Lily's educational journey has been one of many "firsts," it has been one filled with challenges, while also illustrative of resilience and perseverance; it has been a path of breaking down barriers and being the first in her family to exceed expectations around education. Lily's parents did not have many educational opportunities. Her mother lived in [name of country omitted] until the age of 16 when she had to leave [name of country omitted] for the United States due to political unrest. When her mother left [name of country omitted], the move interrupted her education. She pursued further education in the United States through adult school, but never completed her GED. Her father's educational trajectory is unclear. It's unclear if Lily's father attended college, as he's given her various versions of his educational history and is a quiet man. As Lily understands it, he studied mechanical engineering in college, and she believes he did not graduate, but completed up to his third year in his baccalaureate studies.

Lily grew up in an urban working class neighborhood in Southern California with a predominantly Latina/o population, and she attended public school throughout her K-12 education. During her elementary school years, her mother was very involved in Lily's educational pursuits. As Lily recalls, her mother was a strong advocate for her studies: "My mom was always around school…she would bug the school principal at elementary school, she would wait by his car" to catch him and make sure Lily's needs were met. She was so persistent, that 20 years later, the principal still remembers her mother because of her ardent advocacy for Lily. "I ran into him recently, he works for [school district name omitted] now, and he was like, "how's your mom?" He still remembers her 20 years later because she would stalk him basically [laughs]."

Growing up, her uncle also served as a source of inspiration for Lily's scholarly pursuits, as he was the first in her family unit to attend college in the United States. He was influential in exposing Lily to higher education by taking her and her siblings to his college campus when he went to the libraries so they could see what college was like. These small forms of exposure had a large impact on Lily. For example, she began advocating for her own education during high school, when she entered a lottery to enter into a magnet high school where many of her friends from middle school attended, because she thought that school might be better than the one she was attending. When she wasn't successful in being chosen in that lottery, she was persistent in exploring other alternatives, and successfully entered the lottery for the magnet program at her own high school, educating herself of the admissions process and seeking out resources by herself with little institutional or familial support. Soon after entering the magnet program, she realized she wasn't on track to enter college with her A-G requirements, and again advocated for herself with the school counselor to ensure she was taking the necessary courses to be college ready. It was during her time in the magnet program, she noticed some of her colleagues were applying to and being accepted into 4-year universities and this was the motivation for her to explore the college application process. She describes how observing her peers motivated her: "So some of my classmates were getting into college, and I was like, "Oh wow, Danny got into Harvard!" So I started seeing that kids were getting into Berkeley and other places, so I was like, "Alright, I can get in too!""

Lily's high school education shifted dramatically during her senior year, when her parents bought a home in different part of California, and she began attending an international Baccalaureate high school, a high school that was quite different from her previous educational institution. Up until her senior year, she described the demographics at her school as "about 95%

Latino, the rest were Asian, a handful of Black students, and maybe 1 white student," while her

new school predominantly consisted of white students. The change in racial and class

demographics of schools was a large adjustment for her, as she went from being in an

environment where she was surrounded by people of her same race and class, to being one of

few working class Latinas at her school. Her new school was also a state recognized high school

for academic achievement and it was much more rigorous than her previous high school. As

Lily describes it, it was like "AP (Academic Placement)[20] on steroids." For her, the adjustment

in not only the school demographics, but also the academic rigor was both a blessing and curse.

Although Lily quickly had to adjust to a new set of academic standards to succeed at her new

high school, it also prepared her for the transition into the 4-year university. Describing that

challenging transition into her new high school and the lessons it taught her, she reflects:

> When I switched, it was like going into another world because I felt like everybody
> would be smarter than me. So when I was there, I had like that culture shock that people
> get when they go to college. I had that senior year of high school, so when I got to
> college, I was like, "nah, these people are just as dumb as me [laughs]."

However, the college application process itself was not an easy one for Lily. Once again,

she had to largely advocate for herself and learn to navigate the process alone. Her parents were

not supportive of her academic pursuits beyond high school, they wanted her to stay at home and

help with the family business instead of pursuing higher education. As she describes it:

> When I applied to college, he [her father] didn't want me to apply to college, he wanted
> me to stay and help with the business. And I didn't want to because their business is a
> grocery warehouse, and it's really hard labor…so I was like, what can I do to get away
> from that future? And when it turned out to be that I wanted to go to college, my parents
> got really upset, and I applied to a lot of the things behind their back, without them really
> knowing, and I used my piggy bank to pay for applications [crying].

> For my dad, it's disgraceful that we were leaving the house before we're married…I
> remember when I started getting acceptances, my dad lost it. He was so angry. I hid

---

[20] AP course usually denotes "Advanced Placement" course in high school. A large number of AP courses are seen
as attractive in the college admissions process.

most from them, but when college X [name of school omitted] came, I didn't hide it, and he saw it, and he got pissed. Not so much pissed, as he was disappointed. And when the summer came, and I told him I was going to the summer bridge program, he stopped talking to me. It was a summer bridge program for 6 weeks; it was a program for students identified at risk. And he got so upset, because I was leaving the house without his permission. I still came. They didn't drop me off though [crying].

In describing her application process and acceptance into college, Lily emotionally recalls how difficult it was to have to embark on the process independently without the emotional support of her family. She literally researched and found resources by herself, funded her application process, and made decisions about where she would be attending despite familial objections. For her, education was a way to expand her horizons and explore options beyond her immediate community. Her ferocious resilience and self-advocacy in this process is one that would follow her and serve her well throughout college and in her later studies.

Road to the Ph.D.

Lily went directly from her undergraduate studies into her Ph.D. program. When she first entered her undergraduate studies, she thought she wanted to study Law. During her second year as an undergraduate student, an Education professor asked her why she wanted to study Law. When Lily responded, "Because you get to argue," her professor suggested she explore academia, as in academia "you can argue what you want!" She encouraged her to explore becoming involved in student research projects, to apply to the Ronald E. McNair Research Scholars Program and the Mellon Mays program, academic support programs which mentor undergraduate students to prepare them for graduate level studies and research. She was eventually admitted into one of the research mentorship programs, and her participation in the program played a large role in influencing her applications into graduate school.

The same faculty member that encouraged her to pursue academia also played a role in influencing her desire to pursue the Ph.D. by modeling for her the type of lifestyle Lily desired in

48

her future. As she describes it, the faculty member hosted a student meeting at her home during the holidays. Lily recounts seeing her home as a "mini mansion," and thus assumed her professor made a generous living.

> This professor wanted to meet with some of her students, and it was the holidays, so she asked if we could meet at her house. I was a sophomore. And when we went, the house is like a mansion, it's like a mini mansion. And I thought, "Wow, she must make a lot of money [laughs], they have this awesome house!" And I thought, "Wow, this might be a good job for me." So there was that.

This experience led Lily to believe that the professorate must provide moderate to high financial compensation, and would therefore be an appealing career option in offering financial security in the future. As she told me this part of her story, Lily laughed. She laughed due to the current nature of the academic job market, and the scarcity of stable, financially rewarding positions within academia in the current economy.[21]

Additionally, this faculty member was Latina, and this was quite significant to Lily. She felt that as a woman of color she could emulate her, and valued the fact that this professor believed in her and encouraged her to pursue graduate studies and the academy. Seeing another successful Latina in the academy gave Lily the encouragement to pursue her own goal of higher education.

"When I applied it was more like I want to teach college, and I need this credential to do it." Lily's process of choosing graduate programs to apply to was not as clear or as empowering as she would have liked. Even though she had the support of a mentor through her graduate research program, she did not feel she had clear guidance of what types of programs she should apply to and what she should look for in potential graduate programs. In regards to

---

[21] During the time this interview was conducted, approximately in 2013, the academic job market was facing challenges.

understanding what the Ph.D. entailed, Lily simply knew she wanted to teach at the college level in the future, and in order to do so she would need a Ph.D. However, she did not really understand or anticipate what she would need to do during the doctorate to navigate graduate school and ensure a successful career in the professorate. She knew she would have to produce a "project," and would need to work with faculty that matched her interests in completing her doctorate. Additionally, she knew she would ultimately pursue the Ph.D. and wanted to avoid accruing student loans during a Master's Degree, and thus she decided to apply directly to the Ph.D. after completing her undergraduate degree. She applied to a few doctoral programs, based on the faculty in the programs which stood out to her. However, she had logistical difficulties with several of her applications and as a result several of them were considered incomplete. However, she was admitted into one Ph.D. program, and she decided to enter this program. She attended the recruitment day offered by her future doctoral program for admitted students, but she was the only student to attend the recruitment day, and therefore she did not meet her other cohort members until her doctorate began.

In summary, Lily was able to find an academic mentor early on in her undergraduate career who encouraged her to pursue a career in the academy. As a Latina professor, Lily admired and respected her, and viewed her as a role model for the possibilities in Lily's own future. Due to this faculty member's guidance and mentorship, Lily discovered undergraduate research and mentorship programs designed to prepare underserved and first generation undergraduate students to enter graduate programs. But, despite her membership in such a program, the education and preparation regarding what to expect from the professorate, how to successfully be admitted into the Ph.D., and how to navigate the first few years of the doctorate were inadequate if nonexistent. The lack of information and preparation about the Ph.D. may

50

have largely impacted Lily's choices, as well as her experiences during her doctoral journey. In

the next chapter, I will describe Lily's transition into the doctorate, and the process of doctoral

socialization and professionalization experienced by Lily during her Ph.D.

Sandra

Sandra was born on the East Coast. Her parents are of Puerto Rican descent, and her mother had a high school diploma while her father didn't graduate from high school. Growing up, Sandra's mother had wanted to pursue educational goals, but had been told by her father had told her "poor people don't go to college," and thus she pursued Secretarial Studies during high school. Education was always important to her mother and her dream of pursuing further education persisted, and she subsequently took community college classes. Education was always important to Sandra's mother, "but it was important like in a fantasy kind of way" that didn't exactly feel attainable. Her mother's educational story influenced Sandra's own beliefs and aspirations around education.

The area where Sandra grew up was in a predominantly Caucasian working-class neighborhood. Sandra attended Catholic until third grade, and then public school through high school. She was always considered an excellent student, so much so that her younger brother would be compared to her and her success in school by teachers. She describes "being the smart one" in school until high school, holding that identity and being proud of it. However, in high school, things slightly changed for her when she struggled with math and science, but she still excelled in her other courses and was part of the group of students who were assumed would go on to college. She describes the educational tracking system in high school and the fact that there were a few Latino students at her high school, but they were not in her college preparatory classes with her. Consequently, she was mostly surrounded by white students. This is significant, in that this certainly would not be the only time in her educational trajectory where Sandra would be the sole person of color within an educational space.

It was always assumed by her family and peers that Sandra would go to college. However, she didn't receive a great deal of mentorship during this process, and describes figuring out that she needed to apply to schools "late in the game":

> The thing is, when I was a Junior [in high school], that's when you start looking around, thinking about college, and I never did that. And then I was a Senior [in high school], and my friends were getting their letters back, their acceptances and rejections, and I hadn't even applied! I was like, "Oh wait a minute, I have to do something."

Unfortunately, her parents were not able to assist her in that process; and she didn't have the mentorship of a guidance counselor to guide her. But, during her 12th grade in high school, her best friend helped her apply to college. Her friend was a "blonde, blue eyed Irish girl" who was the Valedictorian of her class. Interestingly, prior to her Senior year, she and her friend had been very close until they had a falling out and didn't speak for an entire year. Until their fight, she had been the person in her life who could model for her what applying to college entailed, and thus their fight impacted her college application process. It wasn't until they reconciled during the 12th grade that Sandra learned from her how to apply to college. Her experience is striking in that it truly illustrates the isolation and lack of resources available to her in pursuing higher education, as well as how delicate the pursuit of higher education can be for underrepresented students. As is evidenced in Sandra's story, the slightest alteration in a marginalized student's life can make an enormous impact on their entire educational future.

With the assistance of her best friend, Sandra applied to and was admitted into a Catholic university where she majored in journalism. Financially, she received some support including several scholarships and grants, but was responsible for paying 500 dollars per semester for tuition. This relatively small amount of money initially was not a problem for her to fundraise, but it would become an issue later in a heartbreaking turn of events.

Her college was not exactly racially diverse. Just as in her K-12 education she was one of few people of color in her school, she was also one of few in her school. For example, Sandra was the only person of color in her dorm. Although this was her experience, at the time she didn't necessarily identify as a person of color, as she didn't have the language to describe herself as such.

> At that time, I wouldn't have even used that term [person of color] for myself. I wouldn't have said, "I'm a person of color here." I didn't go into that environment thinking I'm different than any of these other students because I had grown up in a white community. Subsequently, on thinking back on experiences, I realize they didn't always think of me as just like them, but I thought of me as just like them.

This is a powerful statement, as upon reflection, she Sandra sees how she was sometimes treated differently due to being a racial minority, but at the time she was unaware of the implications of her social identity. "I thought I was accepted. But with perspective and thinking about them in retrospect, I realize, hmmm, I didn't quite assimilate." Her racial identity was further complicated by the fact that she's "fairly light-skinned" and English is her first language. Her parents also raised her to only speak English, although she understood Spanish because her grandparents were monolingual Spanish speakers. Most of her life she has had to grapple with her phenotype and reactions to perceptions around her race. As she describes it:

> White people don't always know, they see something, and I get the "what are you" question, but they're always surprised when I say Puerto Rican. Latina/os can see it or assume it, but often white people can't.

When describing this experience, she states, "I never consciously passed, so it was how people described my identity rather than how I allowed it. But it wasn't salient growing up. In my childhood, we were trying to be white, because that's how you succeeded, but no one ever said those words to me." This illustrates the complicated racial dynamics she grappled with from an

54

early age due to being a woman of color who often passed as white. It wasn't until she ended up having to leave college two years later that her consciousness began to be raised.

As mentioned earlier, Sandra was responsible for fundraising 500 dollars every semester to pay for her college tuition. During her summers in college, she would work in retail and save up the money for her school costs. The summer after her sophomore year, she saved this money, and was preparing to go back to school fall semester. However, her parents, who had always struggled financially, asked her to borrow this money to help her father with a business he had started, promising to pay it back in time to return to school. Devastatingly, she describes how this turn of events unraveled her college-going plans.

> Well, some part of me knew I was not going to get it back. I argued with them, but I gave it to them, and I didn't get it back. So, I didn't go back to school that semester. And you know, looking back on it, it was $500. Did I know anybody who had $500? Was there any way I could get it? There were a million things looking back that I could have done. But in that moment, there was nothing, I felt like I had no choices. And I thought, Ok, so I'll go back in the spring, and it just never happened.

As she reflects back on this experience, Sandra realizes now how precarious her educational journey was at the time. With little support and educational resources, all it took was a few hundred dollars to completely "overwhelm" her. As she recounts, it made a "huge difference in the way the rest of my life went because I never did go back to college until I was in my forties."

It took almost twenty years for Sandra to return to higher education. After leaving her first college, she moved to California and worked in a government job, where she enjoyed professional success and was promoted throughout the years. Even though she was in a management position and had financial security, the fact that she didn't have a Bachelor's Degree troubled her, especially as many of her colleagues held Master's degrees. At the time, a new college campus opened in the area where she was living, and this was the impetus she needed to return to college. For her, it was about "having that piece of paper." Consequently,

55

she enrolled in a public university, and it was through her educational experiences there that her racial awareness really blossomed. Her experiences in school provided a lens and language for her to understand and articulate her own upbringing:

> For me, maybe without even understanding it, my life had been all about, never denying being Latina, never denying there was such a thing as racism… but that my family has this sort of trajectory of trying to be as white as possible. And that meant something, and that I had internalized some crap that was not explicit…I had bought into "there's a right way to speak Spanish." All of those privileged ways of trying to get privilege and assuming that I had it already.

Her education became about much more than just "getting that piece of paper" indicating she had graduated college, "it became about my life and the way I fit." It became about reconciling her past experiences and how her identity as a woman of color impacted her choices.

Road to the Ph.D.

College changed Sandra's life. She was moved by the classes she took, but also by her contact with an inspiring professor. This faculty mentor deeply influenced Sandra, "she was the professor that changes your life." Sandra admired this faculty member and developed a mentorship relationship with her, and when Sandra completed her Bachelor's Degree, this professor asked her if she would teach a course at the university. Although she had enjoyed learning when she was younger, teaching was not a career she had ever considered. However, she accepted the offer and began teaching part-time.

During this time, Sandra decided to explore further some of the issues she had begun to discover during college. A year after graduating from her undergraduate institution, she applied for a Master's degree program that was very flexible, and allowed her to design a great deal of her curriculum. She enjoyed her Master's education, and during this time she also quit her full-time job. To the bewilderment of her family, she then decided to pursue a doctoral degree and full-time study. To her family, it seemed she was foregoing everything she had worked so hard

56

to achieve, a stable well-paying job, and pursuing some abstract education that did not seem necessary. Her family didn't understand why she would do this, confused by her desire to uproot her life for further education. For her, it was also "a very surreal thing to even consider," because besides her professors, she didn't know anyone with a Ph.D. Her decision to pursue the doctorate was not an easy one, but one she felt confident in making.

Sandra's doctoral application process was largely influenced by her two faculty mentors. One was her mentor from her Bachelors and Master's degree, and the other was her mentor from the summer research program she participated in. They both gave her advice on which programs she should explore and she also conducted research on graduate programs, in addition to choosing some of her programs based on ranking. She applied to three programs, and was admitted to two. Although she was highly tempted by one of the programs she had been admitted to due to its reputation as being a haven of Latina/o scholarship, she ended up choosing her current program due partly to geographic location. Being in the East Coast would allow her to be around a larger Puerto Rican community, and having spent most of her adulthood on the West Coast where Puerto Ricans were scarce, she wanted to explore being in an area where she would be able to study her own cultural and racial identity. Additionally, she felt she could make a contribution in the field she ended up choosing. However, as I will describe in the following chapter, her choice in doctoral program was perhaps not the wisest. As she warns from her experience, "don't believe those studies" that rank doctoral programs without considering other factors such as quality of life for graduate students, particularly women of color.

Julia

Julia attended her first few years of K-12 schooling in Spain. Her father is from Spain, and her mother is from Peru. Her mother did not attend college, and possibly did not graduate from high school;[22] she was a model and traveled frequently for her work. Her father was educated in Spain and Switzerland, and attended college in a prestigious American university. He also received an MBA in a highly competitive program in Spain. Julia feels her father strongly influenced her educational journey and as she describes it, "he was the one who really fought for me and my education."

During her early education, she was part of an international school where she was on the "American track" in her program. This program was very racially diverse with international students from varied locations. Although she really enjoyed her experience there, she struggled with learning disabilities, and her parents felt she would do better academically if she attended school in the United States. Therefore, for her last three years of high school, she attended a boarding school in the East Coast while her family remained in Spain. She describes her non-traditional educational trajectory:

> I went to high school in Spain, but I started out in international school. I was able to be exposed to three different tracks. There was a French track, a Spanish track, and English track or an American track. So I was on the American track since freshman year. I really loved it, it was a great education. And I have learning disabilities. And my father knew that if I wanted to do well in school, I had to go to school in the States. So he did all of the research when I was in 8th grade, I had taken summer class at this one school and loved it. So the plan was that my sophomore year I would go. So my family was still in Spain. And I went to boarding school.

This school consisted of largely upper middle-class students, and it was not racially diverse. She remembers being the only Latina student in her class amongst mostly Caucasian students. Her high school education paid off, in that it was academically rigorous and she was

---

[22] Julia was not certain if her mother did or did not graduate from High School.

expected to take honors courses. Although she struggled with her learning disability, the small

classes and individualized attention her school offered allowed her to receive a "phenomenal"

education that prepared her to pursue higher education.

Road to the Ph.D.

During her college application process, Julia mostly focused on applying to universities

on the West Coast. She applied to one school in the East Coast almost as an afterthought

because she had a few friends there. However, when she went to visit that campus, she fell in

love and made the decision to attend school there. She double majored in Journalism and

Theatre with a double minor in Education and Photography. During her senior year of college,

she decided she wanted to be a high school teacher, and was able to stay an extra year to major in

History, which would then allow her to receive a teaching certificate. During this extra year, she

also had the freedom to take classes in Latina/o Studies and Women's Studies, where she began

to explore issues of social justice. She then applied to a prominent Master's program, where she

was admitted with full funding.

Julia received her Master's Degree in Teaching in Social Science, and began teaching in

the public school system in New York. Her experience with teaching was very negative,

compounded by the fact that she was living in New York during September 11. Eventually, she

realized she felt unhappy being in the city and realized she didn't want to be there anymore.

This inspired her to travel around Asia for several months before moving to Miami to be closer

to her brother. There, she resumed teaching Social Studies as well as Theatre. Julia took this

opportunity to pursue a second Master's Degree in Educational Theatre during summers. When

she completed her second Master's Degree, she began really thinking about her future,

questioning what she was doing with her life and what direction her career was taking. She was

also frustrated with the many injustices and politics she witnessed and experienced while teaching in inner city schools. Julia describes her journey in deciding to apply to the doctorate:

> So I said, "Well, I'm going to apply to another Master's," and did that in 3 summers. So I was teaching during the year, and taking courses during the summer. I finished that Masters, I was 30. And I was like, "What is my life, what am I doing?"

> And then, talking to my father, I said, "I think I want a Ph.D. I think I want to teach at the university level." I was also frustrated with the politics of inner city schools. I taught at an inner city, and the stuff I saw was just horrible. I mean stuff, I can't even begin to tell you what we'd have to go through. Just awful.

After consulting with her father, Julia realized she wanted to teach at the university level and pursue a Ph.D. Thus, she decided to apply to several Ph.D. programs and decided to attend a doctoral program in the East Coast.

However, Julia's journey into the Ph.D. was not without its challenges. Julia met one of the mentors which would go on to influence her choice in a doctoral program when she attended a conference during her Master's degree. There, she attended a workshop on pedagogy, and was really moved by the woman leading the workshop, who happened to be pursuing a Ph.D.

> So I went to go see this woman who was getting her Ph.D. at the time, she was Latina. And she was doing this workshop on Freire and pedagogy, and I was like, "Wow!" I really liked her. And she told me she was getting her Ph.D. And I think she planted the seed. Because she said, "You know, you should think about getting your Ph.D., we need more Latinas in higher education." And I said, "Ok, I hadn't thought about it." I really liked her, and she really was motivating.

Meeting her helped "plant the seed" of pursuing a doctoral degree, it inspired Julia to consider an educational route she hadn't considered previously. This experience also led her to apply to doctoral programs, including the doctoral program where this inspiring woman ended up as a faculty member.

Julia faced a few challenges in her graduate application process. Her faculty mentor during her Master's degree was dealing with serious health issues during the time Julia was applying to Ph.D. programs, so Julia did not want to burden her with asking for guidance during

60

the application process. Consequently, she relied on a colleague who was a doctoral student to assist her in the process. Additionally, the faculty mentor who inspired her to apply to Ph.D. programs also assisted her in applying. She remembered Julia from the conference, and became her ally during a challenging admissions experience. Due to some difficulties in taking her graduate entrance exams and resulting low entrance exam scores, the doctoral department she was applying to wanted to accept her, but the institution's Graduate Division program doubted her academic abilities.

> They [the doctoral program] wanted to accept me, but my GRE scores were so low, that Graduate Division was doubting my application. So [professor's name omitted] advocated for me. So she wrote a letter, as an additional recommendation, and the department approved it. So they moved me forward, and I got accepted.

> But my department did get some pushback after I got accepted due to my GRE scores and Graduate Division guidelines. So there was all of this controversy surrounding my GRE scores… So I was really lucky that [professor's name omitted], after talking to her, she decided to write this letter and got the program to support me and take a risk for me. And you don't find that. So in a way, she really was a champion for me to do something like that. And really helped me get into the program.

It was due to this faculty member's support and advocacy that she was admitted to her doctoral program. This professor not only inspired her to pursue the doctorate, but also made it possible for her to be admitted despite the institutional roadblocks.

Besides this assistance, any other information regarding the application process was based on her own research and self-advocacy. When asked about whether she had approached anyone else for help, such as other graduate students, Julia replied "no," because the other doctoral students in the program she was admitted to were largely unapproachable. (However, the program has changed its admissions and recruiting strategy since then, and they now have graduate students assigned to talk to prospective and admitted students about the program). Due to the obstacles she faced in the admissions process, Julia was aware that she came into her

doctoral program with something to prove. She carried this awareness with her into her doctoral

studies and it perhaps served as fuel to prove the naysayers wrong.

Lucia

Lucia's parents are both immigrants, her mother is from Columbia and her dad is from Peru. During her early years, Lucia spoke Spanish solely, because the community she was in was primarily Latina/o. However, at the age of five her family moved to the Midwest, where she learned English in pre-school. Lucia's family moved to a middle- to upper middle-class community, and Lucia attended public school. She describes the school she attended as incredibly racially segregated, where there were very few students of color amongst a mostly white student population. She describes the racial dynamics of her school:

> There were virtually no Hispanics at all. It was very very white. Like very white. And I would know this because… our school had this "win win" program where they would get tax credits for any minority students they had, and the few minority students were African American students that were part of this "win win" program. I would describe my entire k-1 2 schooling as being incredibly segregated the entire time.

Lucia was always expected to attend college. "Going to college was not even a question." Her father had two Ph.D.'s and her mother had two Masters degrees; higher education and graduate studies was not uncommon in her family history. In fact, her family expected her to attend an Ivy League school for her undergraduate studies.

During her college application process, Lucia's parents were very hands-on, and perhaps a bit too much so in Lucia's estimation. From the time she was 12, she and her family would visit college campuses during their vacations, and by the time it was time for her to apply to colleges, she had visited over 50 universities. She applied to several schools and was admitted to and attended an Ivy League university.

Lucia describes the abundant resources offered by her undergraduate institution, feeling she really benefitted from an "amazing" undergraduate education. She had the opportunity to

live in the foreign language dorm, and was surrounded by a diverse group of students through

this experience.

> It was amazing. [Name of university omitted] actually is the most diverse out of all of the Ivy Leagues. I lived in a dorm which was the foreign language dorm. So, every floor was a different language. It was incredibly diverse.

> It was the first time I had ever been with other Hispanics, ever. And it was really nice, because they were really high achieving Hispanics. So my undergrad was amazing in helping me find my Hispanic identity, because before that, I essentially was white. I mean, I knew the food and the language, it's what we spoke at home. But yeah, it just wasn't the same. So at [name of university omitted], I threw myself into a lot of Hispanic activities.

For Lucia, it was the first time she had ever been with other Latina/os since her early childhood,

and it truly helped her "find" her Latina/o identity. Additionally, she found it empowering that

she was surrounded by very high achieving people of color. She also became involved with the

Latina/o campus resource center, and became a board member for multiple Latina/o groups.

Road to the Ph.D.

Because both of her parents possessed graduate educations and had very high

expectations regarding her educational pursuits, Lucia had always considered the possibility of

graduate studies during her college education. For several years as undergraduate student, she

conducted research with faculty, and sought guidance from faculty members regarding future

academic goals. All of the faculty she worked with as a research assistant encouraged her to

pursue graduate studies, and this was also encouraging for her to explore this option.

> It [graduate studies] was something that I had thought about for a long time. It helps that both of my parents had graduate degrees. So even throughout my undergraduate experience, for 3 years, I did research with faculty. So yeah, it was something I was pretty interested in pursuing.

Although faculty members were supportive of her dreams, in regards to providing

specific mentorship beyond encouragement, she didn't receive "any help at all" from them. Her

parents were also not be able to be helpful in researching specific graduate programs, because the area of study she was interested in was an area with which they were not familiar.

However, Lucia attended a national summer pre-doctoral program that provided access to many resources, including allowing her to attend the premier conferences in her field of interest. This gave her knowledge regarding which programs were reputable and which faculty members were well known in her field.

> One of the things I did, I got accepted into this summer pre-PhD program. It was a national program and it allowed me to go to the premier conferences in [scholarly field omitted] research, which is one of the areas that I'm in. It really presented to me a pretty good idea of what schools were good, and who were people who were good to work with, and what the process would be like.

When thinking about graduate programs, Lucia knew she was interested in smaller programs. Having had attended a large institution with a very prestigious graduate program in her discipline, she knew that would also entail being part of a very competitive environment, something she did not find appealing. She "really liked the idea of being a big fish in a small pond," and thought a smaller program might also be more individually supportive. She also knew that while she wanted a smaller program, she wanted to be in a large campus where she could have the option to explore an interdisciplinary approach to her research, and that would have many other reputable departments where she could also take courses and work with faculty. Part of her desire to attend a smaller supportive program was based on her father's guidance and feedback regarding his own doctoral education. He had warned her about the importance of finding a good advisor.

> I just wanted to work with people who were vaguely doing research in what I was interested in. I was really keen on being in a program that I felt I was going to get a lot support in. Because my dad had told me about his experience, and how having a really bad experience with an advisor can totally blow it. So yeah, I wanted a place that was safer.

She benefitted from her father's wisdom and experience, he was able to educate her on the immense role an academic advisor plays during the doctorate, and the power a faculty mentor can have in influencing the success of a Ph.D. student. Thus, Lucia was clear she "wanted a place that was safer."

Armed with this information, Lucia applied to several doctoral programs that allowed her to obtain a Master's degree en route to the doctorate. Lucia was admitted to all of the programs she applied to with various funding packages, and chose her program partly based on a generous funding offer and based on the criteria she had in mind for her ideal program. Even though Lucia had some preparation prior to the doctorate as well as guidance from her family, as I will discuss in Chapter 5, this did not guarantee a positive or successful doctoral experience for her. It seems that although she had some information to make an informed decision, she could have benefitted from greater guidance, particularly from faculty members in her prospective field of interest.

Marisol

Marisol's upbringing and her parent's educational achievements provided her with a certain level of support and encouragement to pursue higher education. Marisol's family is originally from another country, although she was born and raised stateside. Her father attended college in [name of country of origin omitted] as well as medical school there, and her mother attended art school in Paris. Her father is a physician, and she was raised upper middle-class environment. Her grandparents were also college educated, and several of her grandparents were professors at the public university in [name of country of origin omitted]. Her family's educational background certainly influenced how they supported Marisol's scholarly goals.

Marisol began schooling quite early in her life, when at the age of 2 she was placed in pre-school. At the time, her mother was pregnant with her sister and needed Marisol to "begin detaching." She attended Montessori school, and then attended public school for first grade. Marisol's ability to thrive academically began early, and she skipped the second grade. She attended magnet programs in public middle school, and a countywide magnet program for high school in the East Coast which was part of an international baccalaureate program (IB), where she received an IB diploma. Her high school was not ethnically diverse, with the majority of students being Caucasian, and she was "one of 3-4 Latina/o students."

For her undergraduate education, Marisol attended a small prestigious private liberal arts college. She was quite precocious in her scholarly development, and she began thinking about her college-going plans when she was in middle-school. She describes going to an academic camp in elementary school for gifted youth:

> As far as where I thought of going to college, I actually started of where I wanted to go to college in middle school. But one of the things that I did when I was in elementary school was a form of nerd camp, which was the center for talented youth, which was organized by [university name omitted].

67

And they put out a magazine, and I think I started receiving that magazine when I was in 6th grade, and I would clip out the colleges that I thought were interesting. And I had a little tiny binder of my college scrapbook. I had already started to think that I wanted a place where I could develop a personal relationship with the faculty. And mentorship from my professors would be valuable to me. And I also knew that I wanted a liberal arts experience…So, I really started thinking about my undergraduate career because of that magazine.

So at an early age, Marisol began amassing college binder where she would collect clips of the colleges she thought looked interesting and decided she wanted to attend a university where she could have more personal relationships with faculty, and knew that faculty mentorship would be valuable to her. She thought she wanted to be a children's book editor focusing on bilingual publishing, which motivated her to major in English. She chose her undergraduate degree based on its reputation for a strong English program. In making choices about her undergraduate school, she did receive guidance from her parents during high school, and some of the decision was based on how far her mother would allow her to go physically.

I don't remember having big conversations about college with my parents when I was in middle school. It definitely happened more when I was in high school, and it definitely picked up when I took the PSAT and I started getting different pamphlets and brochures for different colleges and started discussing where my mother would allow me to go geographically.

Her parents' educational experiences also influenced how they mentored her in applying to colleges. For example, her father's family was part of the faculty at the public university in their country of origin and lived in the neighborhood surrounded by other faculty members, and thus his entire academic life was shaped by that university. However, although her parents were supportive in her college application process, they had an entirely different academic model and point of reference based on their own experiences. Therefore, Marisol was very self-directed in how she approached applying to colleges.

My parents were supportive, but they had a very different academic model, in terms of where they went to school, what the process was like. And they had a very different

68

network too in that their parents were insiders at the University where they went to school.

I was figuring out how to improve my SAT scores, how to write my college essay. They [my parents] weren't pushy or particularly directive. So I felt like I did my own preparation and education doing things like reading *The Washington Post* and looking at different periodicals and essays about college.

Additionally, Marisol was in a magnet school surrounded by many students who were "very driven and very invested in getting into the very best school they possibly could." Being part of a cohort with similar goals allowed her to approach the process with the feeling of having some support and guidance. However, it seems that from an early age, Marisol was quite independent in identifying her goals, researching her options, and exploring how to best achieve these goals.

Road to the Ph.D.

As described previously, Marisol attended a small private liberal arts college, where she enjoyed the benefits of smaller class sizes and more individualized faculty attention. During the majority of her time in college, she did not plan to continue her education in graduate studies. Her goals post college was to live in New York.

When I was in college, I did not anticipate going to grad school at all. I thought I was going to college, I was going to be done with school; it was going to be glorious. I was going to move to New York and have my high powered career as a children's book editor. And it was going to be all glamour all the time.

However, Marisol's plans changed drastically when she took a course during her senior year, which awakened her true passion in an academic field [name of field omitted due for anonymity]. However, by the time she made this realization, it was too late to apply to graduate school during that academic cycle, and this influenced her to take a few years post-college to work and consider applying in the future.

For several years, Marisol dedicated herself to working, but her desire to pursue graduate studies never waned.

So I figured I would work for a couple of years and maybe apply later. I don't know, I guess I thought about grad school intermittently, and it was three years or so before thought I had gotten everything I would out of my job…And then I looked into it [graduate school]…

After several years, she applied to Master's Degree graduate programs in the discipline she had discovered her senior year of college [discipline name omitted]. Part of her decision making process in the graduate program she ended up attending was due to a negative interview experience with another academic department. Marisol had originally considered another graduate program, but a faculty member whom she met with for an informational interview was curt and dismissive, and ended the meeting brusquely by suggesting she explore other programs instead. Although initially disappointed with the encounter, Marisol then began considering her current discipline and ended up completing a Master's Degree in [discipline name omitted] at a large public research intensive institution in the Midwest. She describes her experience within the Master's Degree as satisfactory. In comparison to the small liberal arts college she attended as an undergraduate student, the large research intensive institution of her Master's degree education offered many resources she found appealing.

Some people really love grad school. But even if you love it, there are high highs and some low lows. The weight of self-confidence washes over you. I enjoyed taking classes outside of my department. And valued that [university name omitted] is gigantic, it's like a small city with tons of resources, if you know how to look for them, if you know how to find them. Coming from a small liberal arts college in undergrad, I appreciated the breadth of resources that a Research 1 had to offer.

Although she enjoyed the benefits of her large Research Intensive Institution, the department she was in was not as academically rigorous as she would have liked, and she found that the courses outside of her department were more academically stimulating to her. She was also frustrated by the lack of feedback from her faculty mentors on her scholarly work in her program, citing many instances when she would receive brief one sentence responses on term papers. As I will discuss

in greater detail in Chapter 5, she yearned for greater academic rigor, as well as faculty mentors who were more invested in her scholarly growth.

When it came time to apply to doctoral programs, Marisol explored various institutions and academic disciplines. Her decision to go on to pursue the doctorate was based on multiple factors. Marisol discovered that she enjoyed teaching during her time in the Master's program, and thus the possibility of pursuing the professorate as a career in the future was attractive to her. Additionally, the other types of professional careers she would like to pursue in the future [omitted for confidentiality] usually require a Ph.D. Making a decision as to where to pursue her doctorate was not easy for her. However, her partner also served as a source of encouragement and guidance during her decision-making process.

> I did look at other possibilities for the Ph.D. I looked at [other] departments. I talked to my wife, and she made the point that it was probably not going to be enough to have a Master's Degree, that maybe it would be enough for the immediate professional goals. But I really did enjoy teaching, I was considering being a faculty member, and at least wanted that option. And for that having a Ph.D. would be helpful. And also, I would like to be the [career omitted for confidentiality] one day, and most have a Ph.D.

Although Marisol explored other doctoral programs, she eventually settled on the program in the same department as her Master's Degree due largely to convenience and comfort. Pursuing a Ph.D. at another institution meant inevitably having to re-take some foundation coursework and therefore having to wait at least five years to complete the doctorate. As she put it, "I decided to stick with the devil I knew."

Additionally, during her second year in her Master's program, she began to form relationships with faculty outside of her department. She was also introduced to one of her future doctoral committee members, someone who has turned out to be a large source of support and inspiration for her during her doctoral studies. Her familiarity with her program, the convenience around staying in the same academic institution for the doctorate, and her

burgeoning relationships with faculty were all the deciding factors in choosing her doctoral

program.

Brenda

Brenda's parents always valued her education and tried to ensure she received the best academic resources possible. Her mother has a college education as well as Master's Degree in Education, and has been an educator for thirty years. Her father struggled with completing his high school degree due to dealing with gang activity in his neighborhood, but was eventually able to obtain his GED and take several college courses later in life.

During her early childhood, Brenda attended a private Catholic school. Later on in her education, her parents were not able to continue to subsidize her private school education, and Brenda had to attend public school. However, she attended a free magnet school attached to a larger public high school campus. The education she received supported her aspirations to attend college, and it offered abundant resources in the college application process. Brenda feels "lucky" to have benefited from the opportunities this school provided:

> In terms of that I was really lucky, because coming from a working class background those kinds of opportunities were really important to my parents, especially because we couldn't afford to pay for actual college prep academies or anything like that. So I was really grateful for that opportunity. And I owe a lot of my interests or passion and commitment not only to my family, but also to the teachers at that school.

Her parents had always expected her to attend college, for them it was their "number one expectation" of her, and this school facilitated this goal. Her parents viewed a college education as "the most important cultural capital" she could have, especially because they came from a working class background.

> So yeah, I would say it was never an option NOT to go to college, in their [my parents'] eyes because they really saw it as the most important cultural capital that I could have, especially since we didn't come from any sort of inheritance of money or land or anything like that. They really encouraged me to study, they helped me as much as they could, and made sure that I was in after-school programs and things like that that would encourage a good application. So absolutely, it [going to college] was definitely never really questioned.

The high school she attended was fairly racially diverse, and mostly consisted of lower middle-class students. Brenda excelled academically, and ended up graduating in the top 10% of her high school class. In the state she is from, this guaranteed admission to the flagship public university in the state. This worked out well for Brenda, as she had always wanted to attend that university and was granted the opportunity to do so. During her time as an undergraduate student, she actively sought a discipline she excelled in, with the goal of eventually entering a graduate program.

> There are dreams that young children have of being a ballerina, and I had those kind of those dreams. And then, as I got older, I thought I might want to be a cardiologist, and then discovered early in my high school career that the smell of formaldehyde made me brutally sick and I wasn't so great with dissecting animals. So that went out to the window.

> But I never lost that sight of wanting to continue my education as far as I could. So I held on to that, and while I was in undergrad, I was sort of looking for things that I would want to study for at least a few more years.

Brenda had always known she wanted to pursue an education beyond an undergraduate degree, and kept this goal in mind throughout college. Toward the end of her college career, she discovered her passion while taking a Chicana/o Studies course, and this solidified her desire to eventually obtain a doctorate degree.

Road to the Ph.D.

Brenda worked outside of the academy for several years before applying to doctoral programs. As most other participants in this study, she "had absolutely no mentorship whatsoever" in the graduate application process. Although her mother had attended a Master's program, it had been many years prior and in a very different discipline, so she was not able to provide much guidance regarding how to apply to the doctorate. Her mother was extremely encouraging of Brenda to apply to doctoral programs, and gave her minor feedback on her

admissions essays. She describes her experience perfectly: "At the time, I was working with

what I had."

> I had absolutely no mentorship whatsoever. My mother was very encouraging, but she
> had gone to graduate school many years before in a [discipline omitted] department,
> which was different. And also, she didn't leave [the state], so it was a different, going to
> a different state was out of her range of expertise. And, you know, application processes
> have changed so much since then, that she didn't have too much to say.
>
> She looked at my essay and she gave me some encouragement, but for the most part it
> was just me trying to figure it out. I read as much online as I could. I wish I could that I
> could go back to myself 10 years ago and direct me to some better places, better
> resources.

In reflecting on her graduate application process, Brenda wishes she had been armed with

much more information. One key area she wished she'd had greater information in is financial

aid packages and post-doctoral career goals.

> Now, if I could talk to young women applying to grad school, I would go back and tell
> myself to really take a look at the financial aid packages and to really weigh your options
> as far as what kind of debt will you be in after this, what are your real career goals, and
> how you expect to achieve them through higher education. And what is the job market
> looking like, things like that.

Brenda feels like she didn't have a full understanding regarding the amount of debt she would

acquire during her doctoral studies, and wishes she'd had a better understanding of how this

would affect her in the long term. Although she does not regret her decision to obtain the Ph.D.,

she does wish she'd been better informed:

> I don't necessarily regret it, but I do feel like I was blindsided by a lot things because I
> didn't do my research beyond getting the Ph.D. I did it sort of to get into grad school, but
> then I didn't really know what the implications of that were beyond having a doctorate in
> my hand.

Even though Brenda did a great deal of research on her own regarding doctoral programs prior to

applying, she still felt like there was a wealth of information she didn't have access to and did

not even know she should explore. Although she "researched tons" of programs, she eventually

applied to only one because it was the one she thought looked appealing to her. Additionally, the

application process was costly, and she didn't have the means to apply to multiple programs.

She decided that if she was meant to attend, she would be admitted, and if she wasn't, she would

apply to other programs the following year. Again, in retrospect, she feels this may not have

been wise, as she was not able to weigh her options regarding financial aid packages and was

forced to accept whatever funding was offered by one program.

> I only applied to one [graduate program] because that's the one that I really wanted. And I thought, "If this is in the cards for me, then I'm going to get accepted here, and if it's not in the cards for me, then maybe I'll try to reapply next year to other places." But this is what I really really wanted and so I figured instead of applying to a lot places, as far as the application fees, I didn't really have the funds to pay all of the application fees to apply to all of the places that I thought were interesting. So I thought I would put all my eggs in one basket.

> I wouldn't necessarily encourage people to do so, because you want to be able to weigh all your financial aid packages. I know that now, to use as leverage. But at the time I was very green and didn't understand that, so I just applied to one.

> Brenda was elated when she received the news that she had been admitted to her doctoral

program. Although the program offered the option to visit the campus during a recruitment

weekend, it did not fund this opportunity for incoming students, and she was not able to finance

the trip herself.

> I wasn't making that much money, and I lived on my own, so flying out to [another state] for a few days just wasn't really an option at that point, so I just had phone calls, virtual tours of the campus, things like that. Sort of, I guess I went into that blind too. I was very naïve and very excited so I didn't go visit the campus before it was actually time for me to move there.

Thus, she went in "blindly" to her program, moving to a different state for a doctoral program

she had never visited. Again, it seems Brenda took many chances in pursuit of obtaining a

doctoral degree and relied on faith and perseverance that it would all work out.

Sonia

"From early on I knew that education was a way to make a difference, a way to have a better life, and I always think of my grandpa who emigrated." Sonia's grandfather risked his life two or three time to come to the United States, and her mother was the first one family to be born in the U.S. Her father was the oldest male of his siblings and was forced to stay in Ecuador to help his father while his mother and the younger children came to the United States, and he eventually emigrated as well. Sonia frequently thought of these sacrifices during her own educational trajectory. "Seeing how my grandparents sacrificed, seeing how hard my parents worked, it became very clear really early on that the way to have something more, something better, and the way to share with my children was education."

Sonia was always interested in teaching, either at the K-12 level, or at the university level. Her family came from a working class background, and she "noticed pretty early on how education is one of the only ways to change your situation, to get out of poverty, to create greater access." Her family also valued education, and her parents made great sacrifices so she could attend private school during her K-12 education. The neighborhood she lived in would have required her to attend schools that were not considered academically rigorous, so they made the conscious decision to put her in a school where she was surrounded by people who were "well off." They always told her they wanted to give her a better life, to be able to "have more" and "do more" than they did. As a result, she attended a school where here colleagues were children of celebrities from extremely wealthy families. She was the "scholarship kid," and always worked in the school, such as in the cafeteria and library, to assist her parents with the cost. She didn't fit in with most of her peers, and was friends with the other scholarship students.

Road to the Ph.D.

Sonia was always expected to attend a college, "it was a given." However, anything beyond that was a "pleasant surprise," they didn't expect her to do anything beyond college. When she did enter and complete college, her family felt a "huge sense of accomplishment and relief" that she made it. Her family had worried that she would end up going down the "wrong path" and drop out of school, and thus when she was academically successful, they were quite proud. When Sonia decided to pursue graduate studies, they were very supportive.

Her desire to pursue graduate studies was really awakened when she had a teacher during her sophomore year in college that she felt inspired by. She was a Latina professor who had just completed her Ph.D., and Sonia was really impacted by this professor; she thought, "Wow, that's who I want to be, that's who I want to model myself after." Until then, the majority of her professors had been primarily white, and primarily male. For Sonia, seeing the Latina academic was "an eye-opening experience." "It was almost like a mirror, it was to see myself reflected; it was to see someone who was doing what I thought I wasn't allowed to do." This faculty member was also very supportive and encouraged her to pursue graduate studies.

The graduate application process itself was fairly simple for Sonia, although like most participants, this process was a mostly solitary one for her, learning as she went along with little guidance and knowledge of what to look for and what to expect from graduate studies. She ended up completing two Masters Degrees, one of which allowed her to study abroad for several years. After completing her Masters Degrees, she taught high school for several years before applying to doctoral programs. Overall, Sonia felt that her graduate education and the experiences she obtained from teaching were quite formative for her, providing her with knowledge to be able to tackle the doctorate with greater tools. She applied to the same program

she attended for one of her graduate degrees for her doctoral program. Overall, her past experiences within that institution had been positive, and she felt she had some knowledge regarding what to expect from the program and the department due to her history. She also found an academic mentor within the program that served as a guide and provided a large amount of support for her. Although familiar with the department, Sonia realized the doctoral experience was quite different than she had expected. As I will delineate in Chapter 5, Sonia's familiarity with her doctoral institution served her in her Ph.D. journey. However, her reliance on an external mentorship program really provided her with the support she needed to thrive in the doctorate.

Daniela

Daniela's parents are first generation immigrants and both graduated from college. Her grandparents were working class and did not have the opportunity to attend college. Daniela grew up in the southwest in an area where there was a movement for Ethnic Studies to be incorporated in education, and in a community where Latina/os were well represented. Her high school had an academic advancement program, which contained advanced courses that she participated in. The community she grew up in was middle-class, and her school was across the street from a large public university.

Perhaps because of her proximity to a university, the idea that Daniela would attend college was always a given. Additionally, her parents attended that same university, so there was always a presence of that college when she was growing up, and it only seemed natural for her to attend that very university when she graduated from high school.

> Yeah, both my parents are college graduates. So I think it was just a family expectation, type of culture if you will. Even though my grandparents were working class, my parents were first generation. But it was still something that that was, there was never any doubt that I would not go to college.

> But what was different for me was that I didn't apply to all of these places. I just applied to [the university across the street] and that was it. I think because my parents went to [university name omitted, same university], I was always on- campus, it was kind of the norm, it was no big deal. It was very seamless, very natural.

Daniela approached the college application process mostly independently. At the time, she was part of a summer college bridge program, but she didn't receive a great deal of assistance in the college application process itself. She found the process fairly easy and straightforward, and only applied to the university where she grew up next to and was admitted. During her college years, she chose to live at home to be with her family.

> I lived at home. I don't know if it was a cultural thing, but that was something that didn't make sense to me. Why would I live in a dorm, when I could live at home with my

80

family?   I don't think I knew anybody that didn't live at home. I think we all lived at home if we were from there.

As she was figuring out her future career aspirations, Daniela majored in Education and volunteered in as a Teaching Assistant in a high school, where she was able to get a sense of what it would be like to teach at the high school level.

> I had to do volunteer hours as part of the major, so I think I had to volunteer five hours a week or a month, something like that. So I got some experience of what it would be like in high school classroom, and I thought, "This is not for me." I can volunteer with high school students, but I don't want to work with high school students 8 hours a day, what not [laughs]. So I said, "I think I'll do college where students want to be there." So, I think that's how it ended up my major.

This experience allowed her to see that teaching high school was not the career she wanted to pursue, and led her to explore the option of teaching at the college level.

Road to the Ph.D.

Daniela's interest in pursuing graduate studies was further peaked when she attended a workshop on graduate school while she was in college. Recalling this experience made Daniela emotional, the impact of the message she received was so powerful it truly stayed with her. She describes the workshop:

> Our Dean was there, and she was a woman, and she was white. So she was there, and I think their whole slogan was like, "It's cool to go to grad school," or something like that. But their symbol was these shades, like "Your future is bright." So everyone was wearing these sunglasses, and she wore these sunglasses. And I thought, "Wow, ok. Maybe that's something acceptable! If she says it's ok, this must be something important, maybe that's something I can do." So I thought, "Ok!"

The fact that this workshop made such a large impact on Daniela, that seeing a woman in a position of authority encourage her to pursue graduate studies really moved her, and the memory can still conjure up so much emotion, really illustrates just how much the smallest events and the exposure to powerful female role models can have such a large influence on a person's educational trajectory.

81

Although inspired by the workshop, Daniela also felt she was ready for a break from schooling after her undergraduate studies. She knew she would eventually return to academia, but needed time to work full-time. Graduate studies were not far from her thoughts during this break. She attended a graduate school forum where she learned about a program designed to increase the number of Latinos attending graduate studies and she told herself to keep that program in mind in the future when she was ready to return to graduate studies. During her time away from school she worked as an executive assistant, including working for an educational organization. While working at this organization, she was surrounded by individuals with doctorate degrees. During meetings, she was welcomed to express her opinion, but her vote did not count due to her rank in the company. It was during this experience that she realized she was ready to pursue her graduate studies. Thus, ten years later she felt she was finally ready to return to school.

Daniela had little information regarding what to look for in a graduate program. Although she researched programs and had a bit of information, in retrospect she realizes she wasn't as well informed as she could have been during the graduate application process.

> I almost feel like I didn't know a whole lot. Hindsight is 20/20. I certainly didn't know then what I know now about who to work with. I did my research…But I wasn't really thinking long term. I don't think I had the knowledge that a lot of Ph.D. students have now.

During her application process, she selected schools based on "names and recognition." She selected her Master's and Ph.D. programs "because somebody had said, "Oh, it's a good school," and it was like, ok. I just kind of went off of names."

> I certainly didn't know then what I know now about who to work with. I did my research, I looked at the professors online to see if our research matched, and what not. But I wasn't really thinking long term. I don't think I had the knowledge that a lot of Ph.D. students have now. So I think I was a little bit different.

In retrospect, she realizes that although the school she chose is reputable for certain programs, her program of study was not necessarily the best for what she wanted to research. She realizes she probably would not have applied to the program she ended up attending if she had possessed more information.

She entered her doctoral program initially as a Master's student. Her transition into her Master's program was fairly seamless. Although initially nervous about re-entering school at first due to the amount of time she had been away, she was able to adapt quickly to her Master's educational curriculum.

> It was almost scary because it had been 10 years since I was an undergrad. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, am I going to remember anything?" And it was ok, thankfully it wasn't that bad. I almost want to say it was hard, but it wasn't in reality, it was just a lot of work, like grad school is. The material wasn't hard. It wasn't easy, but it just was a lot of work. Which is fine, because my job before I had gone into grad school, I had helped prepare the organization for an annual meeting, which was kind of crazy. And it was similar to grad school, in that grad school is like two semesters. So I had this micro training.

Although the work load was demanding, she had been accustomed to working hard due to her previous employment.

She also received some mentorship from a Latina faculty member during her Master's education. She was a Chicana faculty member who taught the only Chicano Studies course in her department.

> I was really lucky. It was one Chicana professor, when I started my Master's program, she was straight out of her Ph.D., it was her first job. And she was pretty helpful. She wasn't super mentoring, but she didn't exactly ignore me. She talked to me about information, I mean, without her, I wouldn't have, I wouldn't have dabbled into [discipline omitted], which is fabulous.

This faculty member was helpful in talking to Daniela about doctoral programs, and introduced her to an academic discipline she has become very passionate about.

During her time in her Master's Degree program, she found other Latina/os on campus with whom she was able to create a community. Within her own Master's program, she was older than her peers, and had more life experience than most, including being older and having been married and divorced. She didn't feel a close connection to her peers, and sought connections through the campus Latina/o center and minority graduate events. There, she met individuals who she developed close relationships with, and who have remained close friends throughout the years.

> So, the only thing that was hard was that I was at least a minimum 10 years older than everybody else in my classes. I had already been married and divorced; I had already had a couple of real jobs. A lot of my peers had had a job for a year or 2. So a lot of my experiences and maturity level didn't really match. But it is a huge school, so they have a lot of resources. So they had a minority graduate student picnic. Which is awesome, because I met two friends which are like my good friends today.

Despite the age difference from the rest of her academic cohort, Daniela felt "pretty lucky" regarding the overall climate of her department. It was a rather racially diverse department, including a large representation of Latina/os within the department, and speaking Spanish was not unusual or frowned upon. She compared her program to other more conservative ones within the university, and she was aware of the fact that the diverse and welcoming nature of the department was not necessarily common in academia. When it came time to apply to doctoral programs, she did question whether she should pursue a Masters in a different discipline instead, but eventually decided she would go on to the doctorate in the same department. Her application and acceptance into her Ph.D. program was "an easy one" that involved writing a short essay. Although Daniela also considered applying to other doctoral programs, it was simply easier to stay in her current one, and overall she felt comfortable with her decision.

Ingrid

Ingrid grew up and went to school in a "bedroom community" of Southern California. The high school she attended was a three year high school, where she was largely involved in the performing arts. She did well in her courses and graduated in the top ten percent of her class. Her high school was a mix of representation in socioeconomic status of middle and lower middle-class families, but it was not racially diverse, with the majority of students being Caucasian. Although Ingrid was aware of her Mexican heritage, she had very few Latina/o friends while in high school.

> I was aware that I was of Mexican heritage, but I would say that when I was in High School, I had very few Latino friends. I was predominantly hanging out with White students. So, I knew I was of Mexican descent, but I wouldn't necessarily call myself a Latina when I was in high school.

For Ingrid, she always knew she would attend college, it was "expected" of her as both of her parents had advanced degrees. Her mother has a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree, as well as a teaching credential, and her father has a Bachelor's Degree as well as a Ph.D. Thus, as Ingrid puts it, "the expectation was very much you ARE going to school."

For the undergraduate degree, Ingrid attended a public university in Southern California. During her college application process, she only applied to one school, "much to [her] parents' horror," which she was admitted to. Her decision making process for choosing a program was based on her interest in studying performing arts, but also in her desire to go to a school that was not the same school where her father worked, and to have a little distance from home.

Road to the Ph.D.

Ingrid's route to the Ph.D. is "an interesting story" and "it was a little bit of a journey," as she describes it. After graduating from college, she worked freelance as a costume technician for several years, and was not exactly happy with this choice. She had little social contact, was not

making very much money, and had to ask her parents for assistance in paying her rent. During this time, she also faced several personal family challenges. Her grandfather passed away and her father suffered a heart attack, which he luckily survived. The loss of her grandfather and the scare from her father's health episode really made her reflect on her own life.

> My grandfather died, and my father had a heart attack, and he survived, but it really brought home to me that this is not the life I want to lead. My priorities were all screwed up, so I kind of figured out when I was happiest, and it came back to me I was happiest when I was in school. That didn't necessarily translate going back to grad school, but I was trying to figure out, "How can I be in college for the rest of my life?" Interesting thought process, but I was like what, 21, 22?

During this time, she had received feedback by multiple faculty members that she was quite academically advanced as an undergraduate student. Additionally, she would often help with the incoming undergraduates in her program and would mentor them. She enjoyed mentoring students and would receive feedback that she was good at supporting others. After some thought, she decided to return to school to study academic counseling. She applied twice to one specific academic counseling program, but was rejected both times, which was very upsetting to her. During this time, she attended an information session for an Educational Psychology program that was similar to college counseling. This program was accepting students to enroll immediately, and Ingrid felt this could be a good fit for her. So she enrolled in the program and attended for two semesters. She was doing quite well in the program, with the long-term plan of working as an academic advisor while getting her Ph.D., with the ultimate objective of eventually being in the classroom and teaching at the college level. For her, "after 2 semesters, it clicked." She thought:

> Why am I wasting my time becoming an academic advisor when I could go straight into the PhD and teach? So I dropped out of that program and I filled out a lot of applications and I ended up getting accepted into the Master's program at [institution name omitted]. And that's what gets me into my actual grad school experience.

86

This led her to make the decision to leave the Educational Psychology program and apply to graduate programs that would lead to her obtaining her Ph.D.

For the graduate application process, she did most of the research regarding academic programs independently.

> Both of my parents have higher education. They helped with like reading my essays and proofreading for me. Although I did look at the schools, and I did the legwork, but they helped with proofreading. But pretty much I did it myself.

Ingrid applied to several programs, and was admitted into a Master's program, which she ended up attending. Her research interests were largely influenced by a book her father had given her that discussed the role of Latinas in the media. She was really impacted by this text, as she realized she wasn't alone in noticing the problems of how women of color are depicted in media outlets, and it made her realize she could actually have a career studying media.

Ingrid enjoyed her Master's Degree education and felt it really lived up to her expectations. She saw this as a positive step in the right direction, and maintained her goal of ultimately obtaining a Ph.D. Her doctoral application process didn't go as smoothly as she had hoped.

> I knew my goal was to become a college professor, so I knew I was going to pursue the Ph.D. The Masters did pretty much live up to my expectations. I had a really great advisor that encouraged me to apply, and helped me with the second round of applications, because I got rejected the first year. But I worked as an adjunct for a year and I reapplied and got into 2 schools.

Despite her challenges in the application process, she persevered and eventually was admitted into a Ph.D. program. Additionally, she was told by a colleague about a program that had a high acceptance rate of students from their Master's program, as the training provided by the two programs really aligned with each other. Thanks to this bit of information from a

colleague, Ingrid successfully applied to this program, in addition to the program where her

advisor obtained her doctorate. She visited both campuses prior to enrolling.

> I did visit both campuses before I made the decision. For the campus [name omitted], they had a McNair grant, and they invited me up and I could meet with the faculty and so I would have more information. (I wasn't a McNair scholar, the school had the grant because they were trying to increase the diversity of the graduate program.)

> And for [the other Ph.D. program], I paid out of my own pocket. I had a friend who was already in the program a year ahead of me. So I stayed with her and they had a committee they had organized for the visit. And they had me meet students, they had me meet faculty, they had me attend grad courses, and they drove me around.

Ingrid's ability to visit both doctoral programs prior to making a decision really allowed her to

make a more empowered choice and get a sense of the program she would be attending.

Ingrid's journey to enter a doctoral program illustrates one that is common among

marginalized students, one where she figured out her path by trial and error, but suffered many

setbacks along the way. Interestingly, despite the fact that her father possessed a Ph.D. and she

benefitted from the cultural capital of having highly educated parents, she was still limited in her

access to information and resources regarding graduate programs and how she should best apply

her interests and skills toward academic pursuits.

Claudia

Claudia's family migrated to Miami from Honduras when she was in the sixth grade. Until then, she had attended a Catholic middle-class private school in Honduras. The school she attended was quite rigorous, and provided the "social capital" of prepping her to "think of education as a long term goal." Thus, from an early age, she "knew" she was going to college, and had the desire to do so.

However, when her family moved to Miami, she was placed in a junior high school that could not properly place her in a math class because her math skills were too high. That school left her "floundering" in an inadequate math course. Unfortunately, this was only the beginning of her mediocre K-12 educational experience. The high school she attended was one of the worst high schools in the city, with a very low rate of student graduation rates.

> My high school is one of the worst in [city name omitted]. You would say that 25% of the people are the ones that end up graduating from that high school. So I did not end up graduating high school.

Her high school was underserved, and the majority of students were Latina/o and African American. Although her school had a magnet program, she was not a part of it, and as she recalls, it was a "completely different world" than the program she was in. She describes her school as system of "warehousing kids:"

> You would be in classes and half the class was not doing anything, and there were one or two of us who were trying to learn. It was a pretty bad school. They didn't even have a prom because of gangs, they were afraid of gang wars if we had a prom.

The challenges of that infrastructure impacted her, and she was not able to graduate from high school, but obtained her GED at the age of 16. After getting her GED, she attended community college for several months, then stopped attending when she had a child. In addition to receiving little guidance within her school, her parents were not able to provide advice in this area either,

because although her parents had been able to academically support her in Honduras, they were

not familiar with the college system in the United States. She describes her situation:

> I came from a middle-class family in Honduras. I went to a Jesuit school that prepped
> me, I mean I already knew English; it prepped me to think of education as a long term
> goal for my life. I had that social capital with me. So I knew that I was going to go to
> college. I wanted to go to college.

> My parents didn't know how the college system worked in the United States. I knew that
> I wanted to go to college. I mean I just ended up being in a community college. I felt I
> was just grabbing at opportunities for myself learning these things. It was completely
> self-driven.

Road to the Ph.D.

Claudia had little information regarding how to obtain a four year education. She

describes her lack of knowledge regarding the college education system as she was graduating

from high school, "I didn't know what an AA (Associate's Degree) stood for, I didn't know what

the SAT or PSAT was. I knew they were important, but my school didn't offer them." For

Claudia, deciphering higher education was a process of "grabbing at opportunities" and

individual "self-driven" learning. Claudia slowly but persistently pursued educational

opportunities, and the more education she obtained, the higher her academic aspirations grew.

She attended community college for several years, and then investigated how to transfer to a four

year university:

> I decided I wanted more than community college, more than an AA, then more than a
> BA. Then when I got the BA, I thought, "I think I can do a little bit more, I'll get an
> MA." But I got an MA, and I got a job in research, and I thought, "I think I can do the
> Ph.D., I don't see why I shouldn't." So that's how it has been with me, more like looking
> at what the opportunity is, and can I do it and just move myself forward. I knew I liked
> school and that I was going to keep doing it as much as I could.

During the last year of her undergraduate education, Claudia joined the McNair Research

Scholars Program. She heard about McNair and took it upon herself to meet with an advisor in

the program. Again, even finding the resource such as McNair was self-directed.

90

It was actually my last year when I found out actually. I didn't even know what McNair was until I saw it somewhere and I went to speak to the person. So it was actually my last year of undergrad that I did it actually. They had the program for 2 years, but if it was your last year they were still accepting people. That's how I applied. But I didn't know about it, nobody told me about it, I just found out myself.

Her participation in the McNair program gave her some insight on what is valued in academia, how research and publications play a large role in doctoral study and scholarly careers. However, she felt the individual mentorship she received from academic mentors was limited. When applying to Master's programs, she didn't feel fully prepared in the process, and applied to programs that were convenient and locally situated. In reflecting on this experience, she didn't feel she was as strategic and prepared as she could have been, reflecting "maybe I should have had more direction."

I got some mentorship. It wasn't the greatest of mentorship, but it did help me understand what matters in academia such as publications and things like that. That really allowed me to understand what it means to present the thesis, what it means to do this. And it gave me more opportunities to understand what I needed to do.

And I had a mentor, that person wasn't really available, I met with him maybe twice. I believe my statement of purpose could have been better. At least for the Master's program. But it helped me a lot to understand what matters in grad school compared to what matters in undergrad.

During her Master's education, Claudia had the opportunity to work on community based research projects with an academic advisor, in addition to conducting medical based research. This experience provided her with hands-on understanding of what academic research entails and how to write publishable academic papers, which certainly gave her a clearer understanding of what to expect from a doctoral program.

For her doctoral application process, she was much more strategic in researching a program that fit her interests. She did a great deal of reading around what is needed to apply to doctoral programs and how she needed to formulate her application to be a competitive

candidate. Although she was working with a faculty advisor, Claudia felt her direction was minimal, and again Claudia was quite independent in her graduate application process. However, she was quite successful in the process, as she applied to several programs, and was admitted to all of them with various funding packages. In selecting the doctoral program she is attending, she really explored her options, spoke to older cohort members, communicated with potential faculty advisors, and connected with the other admitted students in her program. She was impressed by the diversity of the program, the faculty, and the large representation of women of color in her would be cohort members. For her, being around other people like her in her doctoral studies was crucial: "It was important to me that there were other people like me there! I knew I wasn't going to find that anywhere else." Overall, Claudia felt confident in her choice and as will be discussed in Chapter 5, her research and preparation may have paid off.

Conclusion

The participants in this study come from very diverse and varied backgrounds. Some of the women grew up in working class racially diverse communities, while others were the only Latinas in their upper-middle class environments. Some were the first in their family to attend college, while others had parents with multiple graduate degrees. Some of the women had been exposed to the concept of higher education from an early age, while others explored uncharted territories in applying to college. Some participants had been exposed to multiple opportunities growing up, such as traveling or being in boarding schools. However, despite these vast differences in their upbringing, most of the participants felt they had little information regarding the graduate application process. Regardless of their class, educational, or cultural backgrounds, most participants had to forge their own paths in their graduate application journeys. Even those that had college and graduate educated parents still described the daunting and confusing process it is to choose, be admitted to, and enter a doctoral program. Despite their class and educational backgrounds, all of the women were confronted with the reality of being a Latina attempting to enter traditionally white masculinist institutions. The doctoral application process is full of unwritten rules, and these women's experiences truly validate this.

Access to information and proper guidance about how to properly navigate the doctoral application process was a central theme in this chapter. Many of the participants struggled with feeling that they were navigating the doctoral application process blindly, often hoping they were choosing the right program. Several reflected on the fact they wished they had been armed with more information to make more intelligent and empowered choices. Information such as navigating financial aid packages, selecting mentors, and choosing better suited programs were just some of the elements discussed by participants.

Several participants also had exposure to academic support programs such as the McNair Research Scholars program or summer bridge graduate preparation programs. While their participation in such programs helped decipher some elements of the graduate application process for some, the majority of women reported feeling alone and independent in the application journey. Additionally, most felt largely unprepared for what to expect once admitted into the doctorate.

Individual initiative and resilience was often seen in the participants' journey leading to the doctorate. Most participants illustrated various forms of community cultural wealth (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006) such as resistant and navigational capital in their educational trajectories and employing multiple resources to enter and succeed in institutions not designed to support Latinas. From facing inadequate K-12 education, to having little academic mentorship in how to approach the graduate application process, to facing institutional barriers, these women illustrated perseverance and drive in the face of seemingly unsurmountable obstacles. Familial capital (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006) was also present in most participants' narratives. It was not uncommon for family members to serve as a source of emotional support for participants, even when they could not provide financial or academic support. Some participants had to navigate challenging familial expectations in pursuit of higher education, while others were expected to attend college and even graduate school.

Another form of community cultural wealth illustrated in these women's narratives is aspiration capital (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006). Even as some of the participants were the first in their families to attend college or graduate programs, they had dreams and goals for the future to better themselves and explore their passions. From

94

overcoming financial hardships that derailed college education for decades, to having to pursue educational dreams secretly in opposition to familial expectations, participants were clear in pursuing their aspirations.

The experience of being the only person of color in predominantly Caucasian spaces was a common pattern in the early educational experiences for many of the women. This is significant, in that for some participants, it became something they were forced to adapt to from an early age. For others, the experience of "being the only one" was something they actively rejected in graduate education, no longer wanting to be the only racial or gendered minority. Some participants actively sought out doctoral programs with racial and gender diversity, while others struggled with the lack of diversity in their Ph.D. programs.

The importance of seeing other women, and particularly Latinas, in positions of power was also a prevalent theme in many of the women's stories. By being exposed to, being encouraged by, and emulating Latinas in positions of power, it gave them the inspiration they needed. For some participants, seeing other Latinas with Ph.D.'s provided them with permission to pursue their own dreams and reach for goals that many had otherwise deemed unattainable. It is remarkable how the smallest interactions with a role model can completely alter an individual's life path. For many, if not most of the participants in this study, their doctoral goals were awakened by having a Latina professor who they found inspiring. The power of seeing other Latina academics is exactly why this research is significant.

CHAPTER 5: THE DOCTORAL SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

"…feminists mentors role model ways to survive in a system that frequently devalues and marginalizes them" (Chesney-Lind ET AL., 2006, p.7).

Introduction

In this chapter, I will be discussing the transition into the Ph.D. for participants in this study. Within this discussion, I will explore their doctoral socialization process in detail, including the challenges and triumphs they experienced.

My research questions in this study are the following: How do institutional and interpersonal factors affect Latina doctoral educational experiences in Research Intensive Institutions? How do these factors influence their pursuit of professional careers in the academy? How do Latina doctoral students in these Research Intensive Institutions respond to these institutional and interpersonal factors?

Within my research questions, I explore whether Latinas experience a "cooling out" of their academic career goals in the process of their doctoral socialization. Do some Latinas who enter Research Intensive Institutions with the intention of going on to pursue scholarly careers in these same types of institutions alter or support their professional goals due to their experiences during the Ph.D.? Additionally, I examine the forms of professional development Latinas receive when they do choose to pursue academic careers; how are they prepared for the academic job market? I will explore how their racial or gender identities play a role in this socialization.

This chapter investigates what factors contributed to the successful navigation of the doctorate for participants, as well as what factors created difficulties for the mujeres in the Ph.D. This analysis will also examine who has served as a form of support and empowerment during the doctorate, and who has made the process more challenging. Within this analysis, it is important to consider how knowledge regarding what to expect during the doctorate and how

mentorship leading up the doctoral experience as well as the Ph.D. application process may have determined not only which institution they pursued their doctoral educations, but also how to pursue resources once in their programs that would contribute to the quality of their educational experience. Knowing about what to look for during the doctoral application process may or may not translate into knowing what unspoken rules and tools are needed to successfully navigate doctoral programs. Just as the doctoral application process is full of unspoken rules which are needed to ensure successful entry into the Ph.D., the doctorate socialization process itself requires mentorship and apprenticeship, without them it can be virtually impossible to complete and succeed within the doctorate.

This chapter will examine just how powerful the experience of mentorship is for doctoral students, particularly Latinas within the academy. Socialization within the doctorate is in many ways structured around an apprenticeship model. Ph.D. students enter graduate studies to not only develop their own research, but to learn how to do so and to learn how to conduct themselves within the academy in order to acquire the tools of the trade to become future scholars. In many ways, they are at the mercy of their mentors in learning the skills needed to navigate the many challenges of moving through the academy. From passing qualifying exams, to producing publishable work, to constructing a doctoral committee, to learning how to teach, the Ph.D. is designed as a space for grooming future faculty members. However, many successful graduate students quickly learn that in order to survive in academia, they must be creative in obtaining these forms of information. This means they must sometimes create counterspaces (Solorzano, Villalpando, 1998, Bañuelos, 2006) and rely on colleagues to share this information and participate in their process of doctoral socialization. Without adequate faculty mentorship, students, particularly underrepresented students such as Latinas who are

97

already vulnerable within an institution that often "others" them and reminds them it was not designed with them in, may find themselves flailing and struggling.

The impact of the mentorship received is also explored in the discussion section of this chapter. More specifically, I will discuss the cooling out function, and how it can be employed as a theoretical tool to discuss the post-doctoral career goals for participants in this study. In this chapter, I describe the journeys of ten women who faced various mentorship experiences, the effects of these experiences, as well as the strategies they employed in navigating the doctorate. The first five participants discussed experienced the cooling out function during their doctoral journey, ultimately impacting their pipeline from the Ph.D. to the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions. The remaining five participants in this chapter experienced varying degrees of affirmation and cooling out of their professorial career goals in Research Intensive Institutions. Specifically, for the last two participants, the doctoral socialization process truly reaffirmed and supported their post-doctoral goals of the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions.

Lily

Lily's transition into the doctorate was quite difficult. She had a hard time connecting with her colleagues, and missed the sense of community she had felt during her undergraduate education. Most of her friends during her undergraduate studies were from Southern California, and many returned home after graduating from college. Due to location of her graduate program, she was not able to see them regularly, and felt a sense of loneliness.

Additionally, Lily felt many of her colleagues in her program were competitive and aggressive in a way she found alienating. "The first couple of weeks of my graduate program were very hard, because people are assholes." Specifically, she faced abrasiveness from students in the older cohorts.[23] "There were people who had been there for [many] years, and they were very mean. I just remember them being really mean." When asked specifically what sorts of behaviors other students engaged in that felt aggressive, Lily describes some less than comfortable dynamics amongst academic peers:

> We share a space with the grad students. A small space. And people usually hang out there when they're waiting for a meeting, or they have class down the hall, so they're just hanging out there. And the times that I was there with my cohort, and we would talk about being surprised about something happening, and the grad students would be there too. And they would dip into our conversation once in a while, as if they were a part of it, and they would say things like "well that sounds like that's your problem." Or they would say things like, "Ha ha, they're so cute," or like "Looky look, look who's talking." Just passive aggressive, snarky little things.

The comments from the older cohort members were disparaging and condescending of the new cohort members. They were intruding in conversations they were not a part of, and chiming in with unwelcome commentary. While Lily and her cohort members were making observations about their experiences as first year graduate students, they were mocked by the veteran students

---

[23] Students in older cohort is utilized here to indicate graduate students who have been enrolled in the graduate program longer than the study participant.

for vocalizing their perspectives. In many ways, these comments could be identified as microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009). Certainly the impact of them on Lily were quite similar to what victims of microaggressions experience, including the feeling of surprise or shock at the comment, questioning the motivation behind the comment made, wondering if a response or retort would be appropriate, and internalizing the emotional stress of deciphering the meaning of the incident (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009). Additionally, the comments were made by individuals who had more power within the department, as the veteran students had been there longer, were better acquainted with the system and the institution, and were targeting newcomers who were still quite vulnerable in trying to establish themselves within the doctoral program.

Lily felt disrespected and "insulted" by the behavior the older students. She tried to understand their motives for this type of treatment, and surmised that the aggression was based on competition for limited resources and the new students were seen as a threat to these. Additionally, the majority of her cohort consisted of recent college graduates, and perhaps their youth was seen as a vulnerability that could be taken advantage of by the older students.

> I remember thinking they must be upset, because my cohort, we were a lot younger, we were straight from college, all of us. We had all finished college in June and were starting this Ph.D. The more advanced students maybe thought maybe we were taking their space or their resources or their funding, or something.

It wasn't until much later in her doctoral career that Lily felt comfortable speaking up and standing up for herself against the microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) experienced at the hands of colleagues. As she progressed in her program, she was able to feel less intimated by these comments, and was able to externalize the insults as opposed to silently receiving them:

Now, when they do that [make insulting comments], I'm like "Shut up, whatever." But when I was, 22, starting, I was like "Why don't they like me?" And now I know, that's their problem. They have some sort of issue inside, that they need to project to the world, and it just happens to be me right now. But at first it was like, it was little things like that that made me realize I don't really want to talk to these people. So I usually don't talk to them unless I have to.

Although Lily faced tensions with some of her colleagues, she did have the support of her cohort members in navigating the sometimes treacherous terrain of doctoral study. During the first year, her cohort took the same courses, and would often meet after hours to "vent" and discuss their experiences within the Ph.D. Their meetings sometimes consisted of having drinks together, and "complaining about professors." An older cohort member lived in the same graduate housing complex as her cohort, and was sometimes invited to these social occasions. This colleague attempted to translate some of the aggressive behaviors of the older scholars, describing pre-existing tensions amongst students which existed before Lily's cohort entered the program. This contribution made Lily understand some of the context regarding the toxic nature of departmental dynamics, and how these issues preceded Lily's presence.

However, as she describes it, she was "miserable" her first few years of graduate study. In addition to facing alienation by older cohort members, she felt isolation even within her own cohort. Although they were generally supportive of each other, she felt like the odd person out. Most of her colleagues had families or were in relationships. She and another cohort member were the only ones her first year that had long-distance relationships, so they spent a great deal of time together during the first year. However, during her second year, her colleague got married, and she then felt increasingly isolated.

The Mentorship Experience

Lily was uncomfortable not only with the dynamics outside of class, but also with the quality of academic mentorship she received during her first years in her graduate program. Her

trouble with inadequate guidance began her first year of graduate studies, when she realized

upon arriving that the advisor she had expected to be working with was not available:

> When I wrote my statement of purpose in my application, I stated I wanted to work with a [particular] professor in the department. And when I got there, I was told that he was on leave for the first year. And I was told, "You don't really need an advisor right now, because you're doing coursework. So don't worry about advising too much until you get to the end of your second year." And I thought, "Well, whatever."

This logistical hiccup in her advising would follow her well beyond her first year of her doctoral

studies; it is a problem that would haunt her for a long time and perhaps invariably tainted her

graduate socialization experience. As Lily describes it, she was given a temporary advisor who

was already advising several other students and was a bit "hands-off" in his approach; his

mentorship involved occasionally checking in with Lily via email, but not really providing very

detailed guidance or feedback for her.

During her second year of graduate study, Lily's advisor returned and became available,

albeit briefly. Although absent during her first year, he did provide support by emailing and

calling her often, in addition to allowing her to use his office on campus. When he returned to

campus her second year, he faced medical issues that ultimately prevented him from being

physically present once again. Finally during her third year of graduate studies, he returned to

campus more permanently, and she had the opportunity to work for him as a Graduate Teaching

Assistant. Although technically "back on campus," he unfortunately once again faced medical

issues and in the process, Lily found herself embroiled in departmental controversy over his

health problems. The nature of the criticism she received was unexpected, and it seems she

became a scapegoat for departmental structural issues she could not control.

> I got into trouble with the department, because apparently, I should have noticed something, I should have noticed something was wrong with my faculty, with my advisor. I kind of had noticed that maybe he was on medication. When he knocked out [physically fell due to his medical condition], the department had an emergency meeting

102

about how we were going to deal with the situation. It was weird; it was one of the weirdest interactions I had had. A conversation kept going on; that someone should have said something was happening.

The unexpected complications with her advisor's health not only affected Lily's mentorship experience and her relationship with her department, it also affected her experience as a Teaching Assistant. During the time of her advisor's health complications, Lily was often asked to step in and take over the course lectures at the last minute when he was not able to be present. This was unprecedented in her department, and she received backlash from other graduate students for agreeing to assist him. She faced hostility from other students, who told her it was "not her business to do that," because they feared she had set a precedent. They feared that in the future, faculty would "expect TA's [Teaching Assistants], to pick up the load." This is illustrative of how Lily was a victim of the weak infrastructure of her department and a lack of institutional support. Although the fear of the other graduate students of potentially being exploited and facing greater workloads with inadequate compensation was perhaps understandable, Lily was also simply functioning within a system of power in which she had very little control or autonomy. She did not feel she was in a position to be able to challenge or deny her advisor's requests to take over for him in teaching; she didn't have the privilege to potentially upset or alienate her advisor. Additionally, she was passionate about teaching and supporting her students, and felt that refusing to take over instruction of the class when her advisor's health declined would be a disservice to them. It seemed any choice she made would invite negative consequences; Lily was truly at the mercy of challenging institutional circumstances.

In her discussion, Lily recognizes that many of the problems faced within her doctoral studies were directly linked with a lack of departmental resources and lack of institutional

support. The challenging circumstances created a greater sense of competition amongst students for the limited choices available and a greater competitive environment bred a toxic academic climate which truly affected Lily's experience.[24] For example, issues around staffing and personnel bled into the student experiences. "There are a lot of personnel problems in our department. I think it has a lot to do with that our department is under-resourced. I think if we had more resources we wouldn't have as much drama, because people are always projecting to try and secure resources."

However, Lily was able to find different forms of support from faculty members she met in her courses. However, it also seems Lily's experiences with mentorship were wrought with conflicting experiences regarding support; she had to parse together pieces of mentorship from multiple people to navigate her doctoral studies efficiently. For example, during her first year of coursework, she had a professor who she found problematic in his feedback during course discussions.

> This professor would say things about the subject matter, and if you didn't agree, and if you said that you didn't agree, he was very dismissive, and a little condescending. [For example] he had us pick our own projects, and had us go down the room and basically shut down one of us after the other. Saying things like "That's not an appropriate topic for this class," or "Who would read of that?!" Like one the girls in my cohort is studying Chicanas in the military and combat, and he said "There is no such thing as women in combat" [laughs]. And we were like, "Oh my God, are you serious?"

> He told me that, I said I wanted to study [research topic omitted], and he said "Who would read that?" And I said, "I would," and he said, "Obviously, since you're going to because you're writing it," and followed with, "We'll come back to you," and went around the table like that…"

---

[24] As described by scholars such as Audre Lorde, even communities of color internalize institutional modes of power and can end up replicating the very forms of oppression they are trying to combat. Works such as "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House" describes this phenomenon. It is a situation where oppressed communities silence others in order to attempt to survive within a system that is silencing them.

Lily found this faculty member's pedagogical style less than empowering, and did not agree with many of his views. Comments like "who would read that?" seemed harsh and less than constructive. Ironically, although he was often dismissive of her during class, he encouraged her and a colleague to pursue the publishing of a course paper they had written. He assisted them with the process, and by her second year of her Ph.D., she had a published paper in an academic journal.

Although Lily enjoyed professional success in obtaining a publication early on in her graduate studies, she faced a highly competitive academic environment among her departmental peers. When she received news of the publication, her professor asked if he could send an announcement to the department congratulating their accomplishment. However, due to the harassment they had been receiving from older cohort members, she and her colleague decided against announcing it to the department.

> [I didn't want to share this news]…because we already got crap from the more advanced students about taking away their funding. I GOT CALLED A WASTE OF FUNDING MULTIPLE TIMES. And so we thought, "Maybe it's just better if we keep it to ourselves, for a couple of months," and so we did.

However, Lily and her colleague could not keep the secret for very long. When the publication came out, she was met with surprise and aggression from her peers. Although her department supported her by requesting she present her paper in a departmental colloquium, she faced a great deal of backlash from her peers due to her success.

> …the journal came out, actually came out, and it was funny, because everybody was like "you did what?!" And actually we were asked to present in our department colloquium, and when we did, a lot of the more advanced graduate students fired at us with questions that were rude, uncalled for. IT WAS JUST A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE. And I was just like "I never want to present in the department again, because I don't want to deal with these people."

This experience made Lily further aware and wary of the hostile climate of her department, and this caused her to be quite guarded in sharing future achievements. For example, Lily has been very successful in obtaining multiple funding opportunities, and as a result has a very impressive Curriculum Vita (CV). However, she has chosen not to share this information with her peers:

> That's why also, I won a lot of funding in my department, a significant amount, and my advisor says my CV, the department, when they talk about who's going to get nominated for certain things, he's like, no one comes even close, because I apply for everything I qualify for. But when I win, I tell my advisor and my committee and no one else.

It was difficult for Lily to be able to celebrate her victories when she feared retribution and negative consequences at the hands of her peers. Thus, despite effectively navigating some significant aspects of graduate study, such as funding and publishing, the microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) she experienced from her peers adversely affected her sense of accomplishment.

Although Lily faced considerable challenges during her first two years of graduate study, she describes the beginning of her third year as the "hardest" time due to her experience working with a faculty member as a research assistant. Her style of mentorship was, as Lily describes it, "one of those mentors that mentors by putting fear into you." Lily felt this faculty member was unprofessional, as some of her duties as a research assistant involved running personal errands such as picking up dry cleaning and fetching her food. Additionally, this faculty member would divulge information about other faculty and students, information Lily felt she should not be sharing with students. Lily feared she would internalize and eventually imitate this behavior, she feared that being in the academy would transform her into this type of faculty member and mentor.

> Being around her made me feel like a bad person [laughs]. The more time I spent with her, I thought, "If I'm going to be like her, I'd rather not be in this career." Because she

would tell us, "this is what you have to do, this is what it takes." So be soul less, be a
horrible person?

Lily recognized this faculty member was not someone she wanted to emulate, but was unsure

whether to believe or follow this faculty member's advice. As she was formulating her ideas and

identity as an academic and future faculty member, she was actively learning how to navigate the

world of academia. Her conflicted feelings about this professor are illustrated in Lily confiding

in this mentor about her difficulties in finding guidance. Lily told her about her feelings of

isolation: "I remember telling her, in this department, I feel like an orphan. None of these

professors talk to me. I just feel like the ugly step child…" The response Lily received was less

than supportive, as this faculty member replied that "it was condescending to female professors

to expect us to be our mothers." Weeks after this conversation, this faculty member called Lily

to chastise her:

> One day, she calls me to her office, and she told me that she was very personally hurt,
> that I was going around telling faculty that I felt like an orphan, because none of the
> professors took my work seriously, and she gave me this big lecture, and I felt very
> distressed afterwards.

Instead of offering her support or suggestions or even engaging in a conversation about why Lily

might be feeling this way, her professor simply became defensive and dismissed Lily's concerns.

Lily divulged her feelings in hopes of obtaining some support, and was once again met with

aggression and hostility.

However, Lily did eventually succeed in obtaining positive and supportive faculty

mentorship, although it was from a faculty member outside of her department. Lily took a

course in another department, and there she met a faculty member who took an interest in her

academic journey and proved to be valuable resource for her. He must have observed Lily's

struggles in her graduate studies, as he called her on her personal phone one day, and told her,

107

"I'm just checking in on you, I want to make sure you're ok. I just want you to know, if you don't feel at home in your department, you can always apply to transfer to ours." He offered to assist her by researching what the process of transferring to another department entailed. For her, this was the first time she really felt it might be really be possible for her to "jump ship" and switch to another program. Unfortunately, she learned that transferring would mean retaking core courses, as the courses she took in her department would not count towards the other program. As she was already in her third year of graduate studies, it essentially meant she would have to repeat her Master's degree and "start over." Thus, although momentarily enthused about moving to a program that might be a better fit, Lily felt this was not a realistic option for her if she wanted to complete her doctorate in a timely manner. Ironically, when he called, she had been exploring job listings in consideration of leaving the doctorate. She had also filled out the paperwork for withdrawing from her program.

Lily's frustrations regarding her mentorship experience escalated when she confronted her advisor regarding her frustrations. Although he had always been accessible to Lily in regards to meeting with her regularly, she felt their meetings were not always productive: "I would come over and talk, and he would just nod." She felt she needed more directive guidance, and after several years of feeling unhappy with how she was being mentored, she spoke up. Angrily, Lily asked him, "are you going to advise me or not?! You're not advising me. I need you to advise me because I need to get out of here." She expressed her desperation for guidance, and showed him the departmental withdrawal papers she had been carrying around in her struggle to determine whether to stick it out. He was surprised by her approach, though receptive and willing to work with her to try to better meet her needs. When asked how she specifically needed better guidance, she told him: "I need you to tell me what to do. Just tell me what to do."

After this, he gave her specific instructions regarding how to form a doctoral committee and how to write the prospectus in order to advance to doctoral candidacy. This very specific information gave her what she needed to begin to feel she had some direction in her doctoral studies.

In addition to Lily's demands for more tailored guidance, it was perhaps the mentorship and interventions received by a faculty member outside of her department which had the most significant and positive impact on her academic journey. The same faculty member who had invited her to transfer to his department also referred her to a faculty member known for mentoring promising scholars of color. Lily took his advice and set up a meeting with this faculty member, who then invited her to take a graduate course she was offering during the next academic term. The course turned out to be exactly what Lily needed, as it was a space dedicated to the doctoral socialization and professionalization of this faculty member's advisees. In this space, Lily received the type of mentorship she had been wanting. The course served as a tool to demystify the journey of doctoral study and help guide underrepresented doctoral students to ensure their success within the academy. As Lily describes it, the course was well designed in facilitating the sharing of information and resources among students.

> We would go around the room, and she [our professor] would divide us by [cohort] years and give us direction based on our years. She would direct us based on the groups we were in, "you, you and you, you need to work on your prospectus. You, you need to turn your paper into a publishable paper. You, you need to work on your IRB." She gave us tips on how to write. She said things like "set an hour a day to write. I don't care if you stare at the blank screen for an hour, that is your writing time, and it's sacred." She would tell us about conference deadlines that were coming up, she would tell us how to get into conferences. And she would give us samples of prospectus that other students had written…She gave us the guideline to the NSF [field omitted] application, these are the sections you need, and don't include more or less than what they tell you."

The effectiveness of this faculty member's very strategic forms of mentorship was seen in the success enjoyed by her students. For example, a large portion of her students were successful in obtaining a very competitive graduate fellowship, the Ford Foundation Fellowship. "Half the

people that were in that room got Ford Fellowships that year." Lily felt this resource was valuable, and felt she gained a great deal from being a part of this space. "All of these things that I should have known, but I didn't know it." She felt this was a space that should be available in her department, and wondered why it wasn't. "I was like, why don't we have this in my department? It's shameful."

Lily felt that this faculty member's interventions were so effective, she was always eager to follow her guidance and instruction. This mentor's guidance not only focused on how to navigate the doctorate, but how to prepare for a future as an academic professional.

> She would require you to apply to conference and funding. Last week, I was hanging out at home, and I get an email from her saying, "there is a job talk in the department tomorrow, you need to be there. You need to talk to the candidate, and you need to be there for the job talk, because you need to see how she organizes her talk." And when she says jump, I do it, I don't ask questions."

Lily was willing to follow this mentor's instruction not only because she found it useful, but also for the proven track record she has had with placing students in academic employment after completing the Ph.D. Lily has also received very personalized mentorship from this faculty member, which she has found helpful. She describes this type of tailored mentorship:

> She was the first person to ask me what type of department I wanted to work in after I finished. And I told her, I always wanted to work in an [department omitted]. And she said, I never would have guessed that. She was like, "that changes everything. If you're talking [X] departments, you're going to need to familiarize yourself with their journals, start with the hardest one to get into, and work your way down". She said, "go to events where [X] people are, introduce yourself, make a splash in their world. We need to prepare you to be competitive for [X] jobs. She goes "are you a member of the [X] Associations? No? Well you need to sign up!"

The value of this information she received is not lost on Lily, she understands just how precious this knowledge is, and that without it, doctoral students can easily fall through the cracks and struggle to succeed within academia. She feels that access to quality mentorship for all Ph.D. students could really change and improve the graduate experience for students. In her case, she

110

felt that some of the competitive energy and hostility amongst students in her department might be avoided if all students had access to better, more comprehensive forms of mentorship. Lily describes having this realization:

> …it occurred to me, that many of the more advanced students in my department didn't get this advice, and they're still there competing with us for funding, competing with us for office space. And if they received this advice their 3rd year, we wouldn't hate each other as much and maybe people would actually get jobs.

In Lily's estimation, she felt that the lack of proper professionalization and guidance for students in her department created divisions amongst students as they blindly tried to navigate the doctorate and competed for whatever limited "scraps" they could obtain. A lack of support for students created a tense environment that was not conducive to cooperation and community building. As students were functioning within an already stressful environment, a lack of the necessary tools to succeed within the academy only exacerbated stress and tension.

Lily's story perhaps illustrates the importance of choosing a Ph.D. program that will best fit a student's needs. As described in Chapter 4, most students applying to doctoral programs possess little knowledge and few tools regarding how to effectively research graduate programs and what to look for in graduate studies. It is possible that some of Lily's challenges during her doctoral studies were as a result of being in a program that was not well suited for her. Additionally, with greater access to information regarding her program, she might have learned about some of the institutional problems impacting her department and the hostile climate of that department. But, Lily's experience is also an illustration of the impact of scarcity of resources in academic programs and how it becomes manifested during the experiences of doctoral students.

What is perhaps ironic about Lily's experience is that her home doctoral department comprised largely of students of color. Within an academic institution that has historically catered to the needs of white, middle-class scholars, her department was one of the few spaces

on-campus that was pre-dominantly Latina/o. However, despite the representation of students of color, the level of competition for limited resources amongst them was severe, leading to a hostile academic environment. This dynamic begs the question of internalization of oppression, and whether the students in this scenario internalized or imitated dominant discourses regarding entitlement and distribution of resources within the academy.

The Cooling Out Function in the Doctorate

During Lily's doctoral experience, she was so unhappy she considered leaving her program on multiple occasions. She was lonely; dissatisfied with the structural issues of her department, and felt she was in the wrong program for her, a feeling that was possibly shared by some of her colleagues. Lily describes this sentiment: "Yeah, the first year, all we could talk about was leaving, leaving, leaving." This feeling of dissatisfaction intensified when another member of her cohort left their department for another program that "was a better fit." Lily wished she had also considered this option, and seeing her cohort member leave for somewhere more fitting made her "jealous." In her words, "I thought, "man, I wish I could do that too." I had thought about it, but she had done something about it. I hadn't, I hadn't applied to another place." Although she knew she was unhappy in her program, Lily also feared the consequences of leaving her program and how it would affect her reputation and relationships with faculty members in her department.

> It would turn into, "you left, so you're a quitter," which is how it's interpreted. Or by leaving, you are burning bridges with faculty here, and how they will perceive you, and how will it affect your career; how will it affect your whole career?…it's a small world.

Her fear of the potentially negative consequences of leaving was enough of a deterrent to keep her from exiting her department, although she came very close to ending her doctoral career early on several occasions. Lily took various small steps in her dilemma of deciding whether to

112

leave her department. For example, during her second year of doctoral studies, she registered for the alumni association of her alma mater just so she would have access to job listings, and she remembers actively looking for jobs she could potentially work in if she ultimately decided to leave. Although she serendipitously found a mentor who provided the guidance and support she had been lacking early in her Ph.D. socialization, the damage of the first few years impacted her long-term career goals. Lily is now clear she does not want to pursue a career in academia, and specifically in a Research Intensive Institution. The politics she has had to navigate during her Ph.D., in addition to the isolation and rejection she experienced along the way made a future scholarly career undesirable. What is ironic is that Lily would perhaps enjoy success in the academy, as she has been productive in publishing and presenting at academic conferences. She possesses the professional skills needed to thrive in a scholarly career. But for Lily, being a Latina within the academy simply requires too many personal and emotional sacrifices, ones she is not willing to make in her future. Lily's goal now is simply to finish the doctorate and explore career alternatives outside of the academy.

Sandra

Sandra describes her first year of her doctoral studies as simply "terrible." The graduate program she chose to attend was not at all what she had expected. Although Sandra had visited the program prior to deciding to attend, the information she had gathered and how the program was represented was not exactly how she had originally perceived it. Thus, when Sandra began her doctoral studies, she quickly realized she had made a mistake in choosing that particular doctoral program.

> The program was nothing like I expected it to be. And in some ways, I feel like I was misled, and it other ways, I look back and I think, "boy was I stupid" [laughs sarcastically]. I just did not do the research I should have done, and I DID NOT KNOW WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK. I read things that people wrote, you know, faculty in the department. And then I met them, and they were not who I thought, they were not even doing the work I thought they were doing by reading their stuff. They were not the critical scholars that I wanted to work with. So that was horrible.

Sandra had attempted to gather information about her program before choosing to attend, she did research in attempts to make an informed decision about which doctoral program she would choose. In this process, she thought she was asking the right questions and gathering insight around factors which she felt would be important to her success in the Ph.D. It was only until she began her program that she realized she didn't necessarily know the right questions to ask. Additionally, she realized her department was not exactly forthcoming or accurate in how it represented itself in terms of diversity. For example, Sandra knew that student racial diversity was significant to her in a prospective Ph.D. program, it was important to her to have other students of color and particularly Latinas as colleagues in the program she attended. Sandra describes how she felt misled:

> So one of the questions I asked when I was thinking about whether to come here, and I was calling people and talking to them, and I came here and visited faculty, and I said, "what is the diversity here, in the department?" [I was told] "Oh, very diverse." Umm, and what it turns out is there are a lot of international students in my department. But as

114

far as US [racial and socio-economic status] diversity, there was none. So our cohort was distinctive in that there were two Puerto Rican women, women of Puerto Rican descent, in our cohort. And even though we are very different, we just sort of clung to each other. But that's one of the things I was referring to when I say I feel like I was misled!

In retrospect, Sandra realizes she should have been very specific as to what she meant by diversity. She realizes she should have asked about the presence of Latina/os and students of working class background in the program. She feels she was misinformed and she should have been more "assertive" about investigating and evaluating prospective doctoral programs. Sandra laments this misunderstanding:

I, I should have asked them, tell me the numbers. I wasn't assertive enough…The first two Puerto Ricans they've had in the department, I think we are. They've had a few Chicanos, but no Puerto Ricans. And there is a huge Puerto Rican community here, very big, very poor. But they don't serve [this community], the university, we do all our service learning there, but we don't get our students from there, from the Puerto Rican community. So it was the two of us, and then a Korean woman, international student, in our cohort, and the rest were white people. A couple of guys, and the rest women. There was like, 11 or 12 of us in the beginning.

Sandra describes the university's relationship with the surrounding Latina/o community because it is significant to her in how the institution relates with working class Latina/os. Additionally, she feels she should have been more specific about not only the racial diversity of her prospective doctoral department, but also in the scholarly diversity, in the type of scholarship that her colleagues and the department tend to explore, and how her scholarship would fit in with those of her peers. Sandra was seeking an academic community where she could work with like-minded individuals interested in conducting groundbreaking research around issues of race, while having a certain understanding of race tied to experience and embodiment. Unfortunately, she found herself in a program where she was very much the "other," and those around her viewed her academic lens as simply "interesting." She describes her struggle with the lack of critical analysis around issues of identity in her courses.

> The other Puerto Rican woman and I were the only ones interested in doing critical scholarship stuff. Maybe that's not exactly right, but critical in the way that I think about it, thinking about issues of identity and race. … It was also white people, like "this is interesting," versus people of color with a sort of embodied stake in what we're studying.

Having come from an undergraduate and Master's education that was rather progressive in discussions around race and gender, she found the discourse around these issues completely lacking in her doctoral courses, and she felt she was almost speaking a different language than her peers.

> I got to choose what I read for my Master's degree, you know, all the good fun stuff [laughs]. I was reading Anzaldùa, Cherrie Moraga, things I like. And it's, in my mind, it's no less complex, but it's the language that they're using. Anyway, that part was very very hard for me.

Sandra describes feeling like a complete outsider in her courses, trying to communicate about issues such as racism and oppression with her colleagues, and being met with resistance and indifference. She often saw how her analysis around issues of identity were completely foreign and sometimes even considered "offensive" to her peers. As a woman of color surrounded by scholars who were completely oblivious around possessing a privileged lens, she often found herself isolated in her perspective.

> And after the first sort of shock the first semester, and there's 3 courses in the department that you have to take, and I had 2 of the 3 professors. I mean I thought I was from Mars. I mean, they were so unreflective, so adamantly unreflective, white guys, and studying people of color, and never thinking about the implications of that at all! You know, you can't even bring it up. Well, from wherever it comes from, I bring stuff up [laughs], and then realizing, "shit, I shouldn't have said that!" [laughs], this is the opposite of who they are, really challenging their life here.

Sandra is able to laugh about difficult racial classroom dynamics in retrospect, but in this experience, she also reflects on how different her world view was from those of her peers, how the realities as a marginalized individual within the academy was vastly different than those peers surrounding her in the doctoral journey.

116

In spite of feeling isolated and divided from her peers, she was able forge friendly

relationships with her colleagues. Sandra attributes this to having grown up learning to "fit in"

and assimilate as a form of survival. When asked if she fit in with her colleagues, she responded:

> It's a yes and a no, and I think it's a yes because my life has been all about fitting in with people. And that's, it's what assimilation is. You can't assimilate if you don't fit in, if you don't try to fit in, if you don't think you fit in. So they were nice people, I have made some good friends here, but it was very difficult to be in class and have these discussions with them. And then even what we were reading, you know, and from whose perspective we were looking at these issues…

Sandra felt the tensions and challenges of having to confront her colleagues' differing and

privileged perspectives on racial issues. This was particularly frustrating for Sandra, as she had

chosen her doctoral program believing she would be in a racially diverse academic environment.

Instead, she once again found herself as the racial minority in a sea of white peers. She describes

this experience:

> So it was a whole different environment than I was used to, it was a whole different perspective, academically. It was more keeping in the white world I grew up in, but I didn't grow up in an academic white world, I grew up in a working class white world.

The racial dynamics within her program were a significant contributing factor in her feelings of

dissatisfaction in her program. She wholeheartedly felt she had chosen the wrong doctoral

program not only for her research interests, but also as a Puerto Rican woman trying to navigate

academic institutions. Sandra describes her disbelief and frustration at realizing this:

> I went back to college to get away from that [racism]. I continued my education in my old age. And there it is [racism]! Shoot I went to the wrong place; I should have gone to [alternative program name omitted]! Although I know that no place is utopia. But I know that those conversations are different depending on what bodies are sitting there.

For Sandra, having the presence of other bodies of color in the classroom could have made a

significant difference in how certain discussions around identity would be framed. Lack of racial

diversity meant a greater likelihood of facing racist dynamics. She describes one particularly

117

difficult example of how she witnessed racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso,

2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) in classes from her peers as well as faculty.

> I was sitting in class today thinking, "If this was a class of critical scholars, critical scholars of color, we'd be having such a different conversation," and I was just longing for that conversation. [For example,] we're talking about performance and we're talking about spontaneity… And about who we perform who we are, and it's an anything goes kind of an ethic. What I was saying is it's disconnected from reality, there's no context, there's no historical context. The professor talks about using the "N word." And I'm thinking, "Who's in that room, who are you speaking to? Who's being assaulted by this word?!" And I couldn't, I keep being surprised that she [the professor] doesn't seem to get that.

As she tried to make sense of such difficult classroom experiences, she reasons that the racial

privilege of her peers and professor causes them to make comments flippantly without any real

thought to the consequences or context of their opinions. She understands their comments stem

from a place of ignorance, she reasons, "They're not going to have real lived experience of racial

or ethnic oppression. So they don't think about the consequences." Even though she understood

where the racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja,

Solorzano, 2009) stemmed from, it did not make it any less alienating or painful for her as a

woman of color having to bear witness to these conversations.

When reflecting on having chosen the wrong doctoral program for her academic and

emotional needs, she understands that no scholarly institution is perfect, that she may have

experienced microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja,

Solorzano, 2009) in any doctoral program she selected. However, she had also benefitted from

very empowering experiences within her undergraduate and Master's education, and thus she felt

it was not unreasonable to want to be part of a more politically progressive academic

environment. When thinking about if and why she felt she chose the wrong program, she stated:

> Yeah, I did, I guess I chose the wrong program. Not that I wouldn't have had other problems, because my friend went to [graduate program omitted] and she's had her share

of problems too. But, it wasn't what I hoped and expected it to be. And it's not like what I was hoping for doesn't exist, because I had it as an undergraduate. That wasn't a perfect experience, because life is not perfect. But it was transformative. And it was professors of color and it was white professors. My Master's level professor was a white woman, but a white woman who wants to interrogate her own whiteness, and it comes out of her sexuality, her experience of the way her sexuality is seen in society. So just really deep thinking, walk your talk, or try to walk your talk kind of people.

Sandra was seeking a similarly "transformative" educational experience as she had enjoyed in the past. Additionally, while she appreciated that her institution was academically rigorous, the type of academic rigor she was seeking was different than what was offered in her doctoral program.

> And here at [university name omitted] I feel like it's very heavy intellectual, which is great, but it's not embodied. People are in their heads, and when it comes to bodies, but it's not, it's intellectualizing the body, and it's not understanding or speaking to understand the difference of experience of different bodies.

> In addition to feeling a disconnection from her peers, Sandra also felt extremely

overwhelmed and intimidated by the coursework in her program foundation courses. The program she selected was not one where she had a great deal of training or academic background in, and she realized her peers had been trained in the discipline. Thus, she felt completely out of her element during her first year of doctoral studies and faced difficulties navigating her courses. She still marvels at how difficult that year was for her:

> And it was unbelievably hard [laughs]. I didn't have any background, almost any background in [discipline omitted] scholarship. So people were reading this stuff and they'd already read it, writing papers about it, and here I was looking at this stuff for the first time. And you know, I'm not, I don't know how to say this, it was very very hard. It was the hardest thing I've done in my life, the hardest endeavor. And I say that, and people say "Well, yeah!"

When discussing the difficulties she faced in navigating those first foundational courses, she describes what she found so difficult in those classes. Some of the readings were quite

theoretically dense, and she struggled to get through them. Sandra found herself both frustrated

and surprised at the level of difficulty of these materials.

> Even though English is my first language…even in the GRE, the one part I've always
> done well in is the verbal. I've always enjoyed reading. The readings were, and are,
> unbelievably difficult for me. For me to read Foucault and Judith Butler, I want to kill
> myself. It's just so hard, it just feels harder for me. Anyways, it was an unbelievably
> hard. And everyone says it is, but I did not expect it.

Although Sandra had been confident in her academic abilities prior to beginning her doctorate,

adjusting to a different academic field and jargon posed its own challenges for her.

The Mentorship Experience

Another crucial element in Sandra's dissatisfaction with the program was the lack of

connection with the faculty mentor she had initially wanted to work with. She had selected her

program largely based on the desire to have the opportunity to work with this particular scholar.

It turned out her faculty mentor's political ideologies did not align with hers, which impacted

how he approached his scholarly work. Sandra realized that she had misinterpreted his work, she

had misunderstood his scholarly analysis, and she realized he would not be able to provide the

kind of support she needed to be able to produce research with a critical race lens. Sandra felt a

mix of emotions regarding this disconnection, she felt embarrassed for having misinterpreted his

research, as well as deeply disappointed. She had made the large, life changing decision of

choosing her doctoral program based on an inaccurate analysis and assessment of his work.

Sandra recounts her initial struggle to find the form of faculty mentorship she was seeking:

> I didn't connect with faculty. The one professor I thought "this is who I'm going to come
> study with" didn't work out. He didn't want me as much as I didn't want him [laughs].
> And subsequently, I felt very embarrassed about this, about the fact that I misunderstood
> his work so much, and "how could I have done that?"
>
> And subsequently, I've read things where very critical scholars quote his work and think
> he's saying things that he's not really saying, and people have acknowledged that that is
> the case, that people misunderstand him. HE has even acknowledged it. So he is NOT a

120

Critical Race Scholar by any stretch of the imagination. Anyways, so that was a big, "Oh my God!"

Sandra had wanted to work with this scholar under the perception he was a critical race scholar.

However, despite these inconsistencies and despite her feelings of dissatisfaction, Sandra felt

stuck, she felt she didn't have many options in changing programs. She had uprooted her entire

life and her family in order to attend this program, so moving to another geographic location to

change doctoral programs did not seem realistic or possible. Sandra describes the many

sacrifices and changes she made in order to attend her doctoral program:

> It was terrible [laughs]. So I sold my house in California, came all the way across the country, changed my whole life. I owned a house. I was living with my mother and my children. I owned a house with my mother, she was working. I was working, making good money. And my mother is older, and I didn't want to leave her out there in California, we didn't have anybody else out there to take care of my mother. And she came out here with me and we bought a house, right away we bought a house here, you know, it was important, because otherwise you 'gotta pay taxes and all that, whatever. Anyways, we uprooted our lives there, planted ourselves here, came here, and the program was nothing like I expected it to be.

Sandra felt responsible for her mother and family, and didn't have the freedom to simply pick up

again and move to a different doctoral program which might have been better suited for her. She

felt she had made a great mistake, but did not feel she had many options beyond trying to survive

and complete the Ph.D. where she was:

> Anyways, so it was very bad, it thought I made the biggest mistake of my life. At that point, I was old enough to know, it wasn't like when I went to college the first time that I didn't even think to, it didn't even occur to me that I could go to another school. But it WASN'T an option, you know, I had already put down roots here. Anyway, I guess there was, I guess there were options, but…

Sandra knew she could have considered changing doctoral programs or going to another school,

she had enough life experience to know she could find other alternatives if she really committed

herself to doing so. However, she also felt the obstacles to making such an adjustment were

simply too great. She had "put down roots," and she needed to follow through and deal with her choices.

What is truly admirable about Sandra is how she chose to react in the face of such difficult circumstances. Instead of giving up and feeling defeated, she chose to explore how she could find resources to empower herself and "reclaim her education." In many ways, Sandra's response is illustrative of navigational capital (Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006). She was resilient in her response and illustrated persistence in how she chose to navigate the situation.

> Anyway, that was the first year, and then I just figured that I was going to claim my education, and I was going to find people that I could work with in [discipline omitted], out of [discipline omitted], I was just going to figure it out, I was going to tough it out and do whatever I needed to do in order to get the degree. And that's what I decided to do.

Sandra made a very conscious choice to find allies she could work with, to find faculty that would support her and mentor her both inside and outside or her doctoral program as needed, and she would do "whatever" was needed to obtain her doctorate. She was well aware that while the institution or department was less than ideal for her as a Latina scholar interested in producing academic work with a critical race lens, she would be resourceful and would negotiate this challenge.

When asked about making such a bold and decisive move in choosing to "reclaim her education," Sandra credits being influenced by other feminist scholars who write about the power and choice to reclaim one's education. She describes this strategy as taking responsibility and agency for her education, as a way to empower herself in challenging circumstances.

> That term [to reclaim your education] comes from a white feminist, I didn't make it up, but it's the idea of taking responsibility for it [your education]. Yeah, taking some AGENCY, I guess. And I didn't have any other; I didn't feel like I had any other choice financially.

While Sandra repeatedly states she didn't feel she had a choice financially, in reality she did make a choice to "take responsibility" and learn how to navigate the doctorate even if she understood that her doctoral program was not well suited for her. She could have chosen to accept defeat, leave the doctorate, return to a well-paying job and return to a community where she had established herself and where she was comfortable. However, quitting was not an option she allowed herself to explore. "I didn't really feel like I could say "ok, I can't do the Ph.D. now and do something else," especially since I uprooted my mother. My thought was, and I'm sure every Ph.D. student has thought this, "I'm not doing it," but it just didn't seem like an option.

Sandra's steadfast commitment and optimism paid off, as she eventually did find allies and supportive individuals to help her navigate the doctorate. The last required foundation course in her program was taught by a faculty member who was more progressive and was able to provide a bit of validation and support. This professor has been able to offer her some of the support she was seeking. While her connection to this faculty member was perhaps not as powerful or as influential as she experienced with her faculty mentors during her undergraduate and Master's education, she was able to at least understand Sandra's perspective. Above all, Sandra feels this faculty is willing to "try" to explore issues around privilege and power. Sandra describes the development of this relationship:

> The third professor, the third class that I took, I connected with her, and she's a white, heterosexual [discipline omitted] studies professor, and I'm taking a class (even though I'm done with coursework) from her, and she's my advisor. And it's not the same thing, it's not the same relationship that I had with my undergrad and Master's degree advisor, there's still problematic stuff, in my mind, between us, there's stuff in the way we approach scholarship. I mean, it came up today. And she's a very good, kind woman who's trying.

In addition to finding this faculty ally, Sandra also received support from a Chicana faculty member in her department. This professor befriended Sandra, and provided a lifeline for her

during her difficult adjustment to the doctorate. She credits her with helping to make her first

year of doctoral studies "bearable" in the face of the adversity.

> The other thing that was really helpful to me was a Chicana, who is in her area of
> [discipline omitted], which is not my area, but she was in the committee that selected my
> cohort, so I know she really fought for me (although she's never told me that), and she
> sought me out in the first few months of the semester, to see how I was doing. And we
> became friends from there, and she really, and it felt like she even did anything, but be
> there, and listed to me, and tell me her stories. Both those women really made a
> difference for me, and made those first few months especially bearable.

When Sandra describes why this Chicana faculty member's presence made a difference in her

adjustment to the Ph.D., she cites various forms of emotional support which were significant to

her. This faculty mentor listened and told her stories, she offered validation, understanding, and

encouragement. Sandra describes her relationship with this professor as a friendship, rather than

simply a mentor/mentee relationship.

Sandra's description of the professionalization and socialization process during her

doctorate includes the type of mentorship she received as very "hands-off". Although she

received emotional support and she felt she had forged friendly relationships with her mentors,

she felt she did not receive the type of explicit guidance she truly needed to navigate her doctoral

journey. She feels various factors played a role in determining the type of mentorship she was

offered, including the mentorship style of her committee members.

> I didn't receive a lot of guidance; I wish I had gotten more [guidance]. The thing about
> my advisor is she has my back I feel. I feel like I need more [directed guidance]. And I
> think she doesn't give it because that's not her style, so she's a more hands off kind of
> style. Which can be very good, because she's allowing me to do what I want to do, but I
> also am not getting the hands on mentorship that I would wish for.

Sandra sees the benefits of having a "hands off" mentor, namely the amount of freedom she was

given to pursue the kind of research she wanted. However, she is also acutely aware that as a

woman of color in the institutions such as the academy, it is only too easy to fall through the

cracks and fail in navigating the system. She feels that while she has enjoyed some success

within her doctorate, she does feel she would have enjoyed greater success if she had received

more directive mentorship.

> People of color, people from working class, need it [mentorship and guidance] more, because we don't know about this stuff. [For example] so I ended up getting some publications. If I had had more hands on mentorship, I would have more. I've done some conferences. I probably, looking back now, I know I should have done more conferences, and particular conferences…

She feels frustration at the lack of "scholarly" relationships she has developed during her

doctorate. While she has made many friendly connections, she wishes she were sometimes

treated more as a mentee than a friend.

> I have been disappointed. I haven't, for whatever reason, been able to develop a very close scholarly relationship with someone here. But I'm friends with my advisor. And I'm friends with the Chicana faculty member that I told you about, with who I had coffee and cried to. But she also didn't take me under her wings. And I didn't ask her to. And I think it's a lot because she doesn't do what I wanted to do and what I'm doing. She's in a different area.

Thus, while she has received a certain level of emotional support from her faculty mentors, she

hasn't benefitted from a more scholarly mentor/mentee relationship with them. She reasons

there are multiple causes for this dynamic, such as having difficulty finding mentors with similar

research interests.

Sandra has had to navigate various delicate situations in trying to obtain the mentorship

she needed as a doctoral student, including racial dynamics and personality issues. For example,

one of her faculty advisors expected to be named the Chair of Sandra's committee, and when she

wasn't, she wanted to know why not. Sandra was uncomfortable in being confronted with this,

and tried to understand the motivation behind this inquiry. She describes the interaction below:

> One of the things with her too is, I know she has told me, sort of, that she feels bad that I didn't ask her to be my Chair. It's in my mind, and I think for her too, it's a Latina thing.

You know, I chose a white woman over her. So that's kind of painful and I still need to think about that, what does that mean about me?

As a Latina woman trying to navigate a racially homogenous institution, as someone with an embodied understanding of what it means to be a minority within the academy, Sandra comprehends her Latina faculty member's reasoning and assumptions regarding who she should have chosen as her doctoral committee chair. Her choice to select a white woman as her main dissertation advisor conjures up various feelings of confusion, while still feeling confident in her decision. Sandra explains:

> She [my Chicana professor] had told me early on: "pick an advisor who has your back, who will support you. They don't need to do exactly what you do." But by the time she told me that, I had already asked my advisor to be my Chair. And I never made a change, because I didn't, and I don't know if this is right or wrong. Even though they tell you you can change, and you can pick your Chair, and it's your education and all of that.

> I went to the Chicana and she asked me "Is so and so still your Chair?," and I said "Yes," and she said "Por qué?" And I told her, "She supports me, she's my friend, and she's never done anything to hurt me." And it would be very hurtful for her [my Doctoral Committee Chair], I know it would be, if I changed. If I thought it would be detrimental to me to keep her, I wouldn't do it. So that's a whole thing that's there.

In trying to obtain the academic guidance she needs, Sandra also has to negotiate various relationships with faculty members and needs to be cautious about not alienating or offending anyone in her doctoral committee. It seems quite an uncomfortable dynamic, where Sandra has to worry about other people's feelings, while her own needs as a student and mentee are not really being met.

One example of the "hands off" approach Sandra has experienced is illustrated in her having had to initiate any scholarly guidance she has received. "I don't know if this is unusual or not, but I've had to initiate any guidance I needed." Sandra names her age, her reticence to ask for help, and the style of mentorship her advisors practice as all contributing to her lack of directed and specific support. As an older student, she acknowledges that her age may have

126

played a role in how faculty approach her and the assumptions that are made around her level of

need and knowledge.

> As far as professionalization [and lack of guidance around professionalization], it might
> be, and I'm sure to some degree it is, that I'm older. I think with my advisor too, I have
> often thought to myself, "She thinks I know more than I do." And I know a lot, yeah,
> I've lived a while, but not about this, not about academia. And between the two of us,
> her being more of a hands-off person, and me being more reticent to ask for help, I guess,
> it doesn't work out all that well. So I don't feel like I've gotten much, if any,
> professional guidance...

This reflection on her part is interesting, as she seems to name some assumptions made about her

by faculty that may be negatively affecting her professionalization in the doctorate. She realizes

that in being an older student, there is an assumption about her level of expertise. However, she

clarifies this is a mistaken belief; although she may have great life experience and maturity, the

world of academia is foreign to her. Additionally, she seems to both acknowledge that this is a

problematic dynamic, while also excusing it as not necessarily negative. It is only when Sandra

connects with other graduate students navigating the doctorate and hears about their experiences

of mentorship that she realizes what she is not receiving as a mentee.

> So yeah, when I talk to some of my friends going through this same, this Ph.D. thing,
> they have more hands on mentorship than I have had. Like I'm jealous of a couple of my
> friends, they had these amazing people who would sit them down and say, "Look, this is
> what you have to do," and I don't get that.

> And I think part of it is an age thing, I really do. People don't treat me the same way that
> they would a 25, 26, 27 year old. Which, in a way is good, but it has its drawbacks.
> Sometimes I do wish somebody would say "look, here's this grant, here's what you're
> going to do." I feel like I should be past that, and I think they think I am, but I'm not.
> You know, like it's a big effort to write this stuff for me. And even though I have
> experience in other kinds of grant writing, this academic stuff is so not, it doesn't come to
> me easily. I don't get it.

As Sandra thinks about her doctoral socialization experiences, she contemplates whether this

lack of knowledge is due to lack of cultural capital, whether her reticence to ask for more

specific guidance is partly her fault, and how much of these experiences are connected to her

race and class. She reflects:

> And I don't know how much that [being less assertive about asking for help] has to do
> with my working class background, being Puerto Rican, I don't know. You know, I can't
> put percentages on it, I think it's all partly there.

She understands there are multiple variables informing her doctoral socialization experience, and

she feels some frustration with this. Sandra is fully aware of the impact of the type of

mentorship she has and has not received, she knows there are gaps of information in her training,

and she is clear how that affects some very significant factors such as graduate funding and being

marketable for particular academic jobs in her future. One example is in how she navigated her

doctoral qualifying exams, and the lack of guidance in this process.

> The pressure [of qualifying exams], it doesn't create my best work…so I don't feel like it
> was a useful process for me, it was like a gauntlet. So I'll never use those papers to help
> me with my dissertation, I'm not using that…So maybe they [my doctoral committee]
> could have helped me do it better, maybe we could have met, either prior, or after, in
> order to make some part of the process helpful to me. But that didn't happen. Again, I
> think I would have had to initiate it. So I didn't know, I panicked, and tried to get
> through them.

With more hands-on guidance, Sandra could have utilized the work produced from her

qualifying exams towards developing her dissertation. Instead, she simply produced work she

will never likely utilize again in her academic career. Her experiences around publishing and

presenting at conferences have also been less than satisfying. She has received opportunities to

publish during her doctorate, but even these opportunities have been challenging and illustrative

of the "hands-off" mentorship style her mentors possess. She describes one particularly

uncomfortable experience with publishing:

> She [my faculty mentor] did ask me to write with her. And I did, and it was a weird kind
> of a thing, because she ended up writing it, and that's just who she is. She lives in a
> different plane of thinking about this experience that we had together that we were
> writing about, and she didn't paint me with her there. So I ended up, (and I feel not good

128

about this), I ended up getting credit for something that I didn't write, and at the time, I didn't even understand. I do now.

In this particular experience, Sandra feels her exclusion from the creative writing process was due to her mentor's communication and working style. Overall, Sandra feels that while she has had some publications during her doctorate, with more guidance she could have enjoyed a more prolific publishing career. "I ended up getting some publications. If I had had more hands on mentorship, I would have more. I've done some conferences. I probably, looking back now, I know I should have done more conferences." Her experiences in applying for funding have been similar, where she has received some, but limited, advice on how to approach the process.

> My advisor will periodically send me things [information about funding opportunities]. Umm, the others [doctoral committee members] don't do it. And in my other life, [in my previous career], I used to evaluate grants, nonprofits would write grants for money from us. So I kind of know how to do that, it's different than the academic stuff, but I know how to do it. And I have to be honest, I haven't been that successful.

Again, it seems that while Sandra is receiving some forms of information and direction, she is often left to navigate these processes alone. Like many steps within the doctorate, successfully applying for academic grants and fellowships require a certain level of knowledge and skills. Thus, even though Sandra possesses some grant writing skills acquired during her past professional career, she is aware that these skills don't necessarily transfer to scholarly funding applications.

Despite her frustrations with her mentorship experience, particularly around obtaining structural support, Sandra feels fortunate in some of her experiences around obtaining emotional support. In comparison to other more challenging experiences she has witnessed among peers, she knows there are areas where she has received a great deal of emotional support and validation from her advisors. She describes some more difficult experiences she has witnessed in other graduate students. For example, she describes her doctoral qualifying exams:

They [my doctoral committee] were great in that they all gave me my questions in advance. Not all faculty do that, there's horror stories about faculty. You walk into the room and you're given a question, and you have no idea, and they usually don't flunk people, but you have to re-write it and it's humiliating. Nobody did that to me, they were very wonderful about that.

But then you have to advance your doctoral defense orally, and that was actually a great conversation. And I've heard horror stories of people that come out crying, and they try to make you look stupid, and all of that. It [the doctoral defense] was a conversation among colleagues about the things that I was interested in. That was fabulous. So in that sense, they were wonderful.

Sandra knows just how much worse the doctoral mentorship and professionalization experience could potentially be, and this makes her grateful she has not had to endure those challenges. She knows her experience in the Ph.D. hasn't been the best, but it also could be much worse.

One area where Sandra feels she has really enjoyed success during the Ph.D. is teaching. Sandra discovered her love of teaching early in her academic career when she was given the opportunity to be an Instructor during her Master's program.

I've taught a lot, and I **love** the teaching. I started to teach the Fall semester after I got my BA. And it was the time of life. Also, I had done presentations; I had done workshops in my profession.

But being in the classroom, being the teacher, you know, the academic role, it's just different. So, I was just scared that first semester, and it was just great, it was so great. And I just kept doing it. So I taught all through my Master's program, my own classes. And I took other people's syllabi and revised them.

In fact, Sandra's experiences with teaching during her Master's program was a large part of the reason she decided to pursue a doctorate. One particular aspect she really enjoyed being an instructor was the ability to empower marginalized students through education. She worked with students who were the first in their family to attend college, and she saw just how transformative education could be.

It was having an opportunity to teach at a Hispanic serving institution, that's what they call it, during my Master's degree. I had this opportunity to teach these classes that were much more diverse, and I could really see the difference between the first generation

130

college students. Because those students for the most part, **so** wanted to be there, were so great in class, just loving it, I just loved teaching them, being there with them…many of them immigrants, children of farm workers, sometimes undocumented students. I couldn't help but compare it to some of the more privileged white students who were like "just let me out of here with a piece of paper." And just it was like so distinctive; it was such a difference between these two groups of students.

Sandra was able to see firsthand the model of what it looks like to create pedagogy of liberation.

The pedagogy I learned was of valuing them [the students] and trying to create a place where they felt this is their classroom. Creating a classroom that was theirs. And the focus on the importance of lived experience, on just valuing different Latino cultures, all of that, language, everything…it was a very different dynamic that was happening…so that the message hopefully was "this is your education." And it made me want to recreate that.

Sandra believed she would be trained to become a more skilled educator as part of her doctoral education. While the opportunities to teach she's had during the Ph.D. have certainly allowed her to develop her skills, she also realizes she was mistaken about her assumptions of what doctoral training entailed.

I have gotten a lot of opportunities to teach and I really like it. I remember telling my undergrad advisor that I want to go on to the PhD because I really got hooked on the teaching, and I wanted to do it better. And she said, "That's not what you're going to learn in a Ph.D." And she's right. That's not what they teach you. You learn to teach by teaching. So yeah, I've had a lot of opportunities, and I've been lucky to do that.

The Cooling Out Function in the Doctorate

Sandra is certain she is not interested in pursuing a career within a research intensive institution. She wants to be in an academic space where she will be able to work with other students of color, with first generation students, where she will be surrounded by other scholars of color.

Most of my life I've lived in a predominantly white environment, and I don't want that anymore. So for what's left in the third part of my life, I want to find and create spaces, it's not like I want to be separatist or anything, I just want Latino people around. So I'm thinking, where are the students of color? The community college, there are very few here at this Research 1 Institution.

Teaching, among other reasons, is why Sandra feels the Research Intensive Institution is not

where she would like to be in her career.

> But I'm also at a different place. I'm older. I'm not looking for a Research 1 job. In fact, I'm not even sure I want a Research 1 job. I want to teach at a community college or a teaching college where there are lots of students of color. I really want to teach. So I'm in a different place. So I made decisions that wouldn't have been good if I was trying to be the star professor at a research university.

Sandra's age, coupled with her perceptions and experiences at a Research Intensive Institution as

a Latina, reaffirm her lack of desire to work within that type of environment. When discussing

her post-Ph.D. career options, she utilizes humor to address her position as a woman of color in

relation to Research Intensive Institutions and the professorate.

> It's pragmatic for me too. I'm not going to have a forty year career teaching. These jobs, they are extremely competitive. At a Research 1, it's a good thing they don't want me here because I don't want to be here [laughs]. But it really is true, luckily it really is true. I don't have the desire to be the sage on the stage, the star professor to write all of these books.

> My decision to get the terminal degree, it was a very personal one in many ways, and it was also a professional one in that I wanted to come back and be a professor, not an adjunct, but a professor, and have the Ph.D., and have this body of knowledge to draw on for the sake of the students.

It is notable that while Sandra has been granted the opportunity to teach, teaching is not as

valued within Research Intensive Institutions as publishing and presenting at conferences. In her

doctoral socialization, Sandra was being groomed to pursue a career within a teaching institution

or community college, but not groomed to be competitive at a Research Intensive Institution.

Additionally, teaching is a form of service work that is often asked of adjunct instructors and

graduate students who receive very little financial compensation for the work. In essence,

graduate students are often cheap forms of labor providing a service to the university. Thus,

while Sandra will emerge from her doctorate with an abundance of teaching experience and

skills, it is perhaps no accident that she will be better prepared to obtain employment within a

Teaching University than a Research Intensive one. This again begs the question: within

Research Intensive Institutions, who is mentored by faculty to become future research scholars,

who is seen as being worthy of the investment it requires to shape future producers of

knowledge? How do racial, gendered, and class identity impact who is nurtured to become

successful within Research Intensive Universities?

Julia

Julia entered her doctoral program with the odds stacked against her. As discussed in

Chapter 4, Julia did not do well in her graduate entrance exams. Thus, when she began her

Ph.D., some faculty members and administration had doubts regarding her abilities to succeed

within the program. Julia's faculty mentor received criticism for advocating her acceptance into

the doctorate, including receiving racially derogatory comments regarding Julia's potential. She

describes the resistance her faculty mentor faced in admitting Julia into the program: "There was

a meeting where the deans were yelling at my program for accepting me, and they [faculty in my

program] were told "Latinos don't stay in Ph.D. programs," and my department was like, "No,

she's going to stay." Thus, she knew upon entering the doctorate that she was expected to fail by

the institution; she was an outsider fighting to enter a racially hostile environment. However,

Julia did not allow this information to deter her from pursuing her dreams. When she began her

doctoral program, she entered with four other students. She describes her cohort:

> They accepted 5 of us and we all attended…[including] 2 other women, 2 white women.
> They both have finished the program. They both had full rides and graduate
> assistantships, so they both had full funding for 3 years.

As she discusses her other cohort members, Julia is very deliberate about pointing out the types

of funding packages her colleagues received in comparison to her. Not only did Julia face

difficulties in being accepted into the program, the lack of institutional investment in her

scholarly potential is also reflected in the funding package she received in comparison to her

peers. The amount of financial support given to doctoral students is an important form of

instrumental support. Funding can significantly impact the doctorate for students; it affects the

amount of time Ph.D. students are given to focus on their research, versus having to divide their

time to be able to subsidize their studies. Julia describes her own funding offer in comparison to her peers:

> So, it's really nice when you have full funding for 3 years, it's a lot easier to finish your Ph.D. at a better pace. Whereas with me, I only had funding for 1 year, so I had to hustle. Once I finished my coursework, I had to hustle and I ended up working 6 jobs at one time, and it was lovely [sarcastic use of the word "lovely"]…

Julia's tone is sarcastic and slightly angry when describing the meager financial support her doctoral program offered her in comparison to her peers. The lack of monetary resources offered to Julia placed her in a position where she had to "hustle" to survive economically while navigating the multiple challenges of a doctoral program.

In addition to the financial inequalities she faced, she was quite cognizant of the racial dynamics of the demographics of her cohort. When discussing her cohort members, she is very pointed in her description of their race. For example, she describes one of her colleagues as "We had a white male, who was accepted without a Master's degree, who dropped out of the program. I didn't drop out, but he did…" Julia is very deliberate in pointing out that he was accepted into a highly competitive program without a Master's Degree, the institution had enough faith in his abilities that they admitted him into the program with fewer qualifications than his peers. Julia feels it is not coincidental that he was a white male. Yet ironically, despite the advantages he may have received due to his privilege, he was not able to perform academically and eventually left the program. Julia does not fail to point out that she, despite the naysayers, did not drop out of the doctorate.

Although she was a minority in her department and the only woman of color in her cohort, Julia did find an ally that she felt she could lean on and find support from, another person of color. Being two racial minorities within a largely homogenous department made it impossible to ignore their status as the underdogs in the program. However, this awareness

135

provided them with the determination and drive to challenge the institutional racism surrounding

them and successfully complete the doctorate. They served as a source of inspiration, guidance

and support for each other, vowing to be successful in their endeavors. Julia describes the

promise to succeed they made to each other during their very first year in the Ph.D.:

> Going back to my first year, I also had Jeremy [name changed for anonymity], and he is
> African American. And he and I gravitated towards one another, we realized we were the
> minorities, we were the exceptions to the rule having been accepted to the program, him
> being Black and me being Latina. So we promised each other that we would finish the
> program. We would make it happen no matter what. And he was incredible with that
> promise. And he's working on it still. It was really wonderful to have him. Also, there
> was not a competitive edge when it came to him.

Julia was not only able to rely on him for validation regarding her experience as a racial minority

within academia, but also as a source of emotional support devoid of competitive or cutthroat

politics. Unfortunately, her other peers were very competitive, and thus she was only able to

count on her one ally in her program. Julia describes the less than cooperative environment she

faced amongst her peers, including competition for teaching opportunities. She entered the

program with teaching experience, and this made her an attractive candidate for instructor

positions. As a result, she was offered multiple opportunities to teach courses within her

department as well as other academic institutions, but faced backlash from her peers. The

backlash was felt in the form of snide and undercutting comments challenging her expertise and

skills.

> I started teaching courses; [name of academic institution omitted] offered me courses and
> didn't offer them courses. So I would get comments like "how come you're teaching?"
> And I would have to be "Well, I've been teaching for 10-15 years, and you've never
> taught before. I have expertise in this area, and you don't." So it was really interesting to
> see that type of competitiveness and comments, which were very negative.

Julia was also assertive in creating professional opportunities for herself and her colleagues. For

example, she participated in creating Teaching Assistantships (T.A.) in her department, which

provided an excellent opportunity to develop teaching skills, as well as build up their curriculum

vita. As Julia describes it, she and her colleague Jeremy were instrumental in creating the

position of Teaching Assistant within her particular academic program. When she and Jeremy

first began to work as T.A.'s, they were willing to work for free, understanding that the

experience alone was valuable regardless of any immediate financial reward. Her instincts about

this were correct, as this work led to future professional opportunities and opened multiple

professional doors for her. Julia describes how she forged the way for paid Teaching

Assistantships within her department.

> In my department, we didn't really have Teaching Assistants when we got there. And
> myself and my colleague Jeremy asked if we could be TA's, and they started having
> Teaching Assistants. And they loved it, and now they have Teaching Assistants. We just
> did it because we wanted to do it for the experience, and now they have paid Teaching
> Assistants.
>
> We both thought, "Why not do this, get the experience? And then we both got to teach
> classes." And some of the other students were upset when I got teaching positions, but I
> was like, "Did you spend last semester as a Teaching Assistant, not getting paid? No, I
> did. And now I'm getting paid to teach because I did that." Then you get to put that on
> your CV. Sometimes people don't know. They don't realize the free services you do can
> pay off. I ended up helping with conferences, I ended up doing 3 conferences at [name of
> institution omitted]. But now I have that on my CV, so when I apply to jobs, I can say,
> let me tell you about...

Julia describes this type of dynamic as both a sacrifice and an investment in her future scholarly

career. She understands the power dynamic of academic institutions, and how little power

graduate students possess in the system.

> And I know all about that type of work, the administrative work. So when I go on job
> talks, I can also describe those skills. And again, you don't get paid to do that type of
> work. You do it as a Ph.D. You're a slave to the system, to the Ph.D., but you do it.
> And I think it pays off. And you learn.
>
> Now that I'm in a tenure track position, I can sit in the meetings, and I know what I'm
> talking about, because I'm experienced. A lot of things that teaching taught me. Where
> some of my colleagues, some of them don't have a clue, because all they did was work
> on the Ph.D. and nothing else.

Julia describes her funding situation as "a blessing in disguise." While she would have loved to

have received funding, and understands that a larger amount of financial support from her

department would have made her doctoral journey much less stressful, she also understands how

it forced her to be resourceful and develop a skill that is now valued in her current position.

The Cooling Out Function in the Doctorate

Julia received not only underhanded comments challenging her expertise in teaching

from colleagues, but also overtly racial comments minimizing her abilities, and attributing her

success to her status as a racial minority. Her vast experience teaching before the doctorate as

well as during her Ph.D. facilitated her ability to find a tenure-track teaching position as she was

near completing her degree. However, her professional success was met with doubt and

derision.

> So I had this one thing happen to me. I also taught at [a different institution, name omitted] as an adjunct. I ran into another Ph.D., a white woman, and she learned that I was starting in the Fall in a tenure track position. And she was like, "how did you get hired? I finished my Ph.D. already, and they didn't hire me. **It's probably because you're a Latina and they were looking for someone to fill in the gap**." And those type of comments I've heard a couple of times. And no, it's not because I'm a Latina. It's because I'm studying something that you're not.

This type of outright blatant racism was not only offensive, but also illustrative of the white

supremacy and insidious racism present within many scholarly institutions. Her peers could not

fathom that Julia, as a racial minority, might be a more skilled educator, or simply a better fit for

the academic department where she was hired than they were. Their position of privilege

assumed that academic positions should be available to them, not a racial minority, and tokenism

was the only plausible reason why a Latina might be hired instead of a white woman.

Despite the racial micro and macroaggressions Julia faced during her doctorate, her sense

of self-worth and her confidence in her abilities never waned, she was always self-aware of what

assets she offered as an academic and educator (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso,

Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009). In the face of criticism and doubt from competitive and

aggressive peers, she knew her teaching experience was valuable. For example, Julia was aware

that her many years of teaching experience, as well as her research interests, made her a unique

candidate in the academic job market. She was also aware of the irony of her situation, how her

doctoral funding package and the lack of financial support from her department forced her to

develop teaching experience in higher education, and how this experience then equipped her with

the tools necessary to be a more desirable employment candidate. Her experience as an adjunct

instructor allowed her to prove herself as a skilled educator, as well as provided her entry into an

academic institution.

> What you're teaching and focusing on is going to direct what you'll end up teaching in
> tenure track positions. And also, while a lot of people had fellowships and funding and
> didn't have to work, I was working 6 jobs and teaching at 3 universities. So when a full-
> time tenure-track position opened up at one of those universities, I had been teaching
> there for 3 years, they had all of my teaching records, and all of my evaluations. And it
> was really good. So of course, why not hire someone who already is in house, knows the
> system, knows the students, is a good professor, and brings something to the department
> that they don't already have?

Julia experienced microaggressions from some peers, but also had strong support system from

Jeremy, which perhaps allowed her to counteract the cutthroat nature of some colleagues (Pierce,

1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009).

> With my other cohort members, it was really competitive, which felt unhealthy. Now the
> 4 of us have full time positions at tenure-track posts. And Jeremy [name changed for
> anonymity] and I haven't finished our Ph.D.'s, the other 2 women have. But Jeremy and
> I got tenure track positions before they did. And there was this really sense of
> competitiveness with the other two women, but not with Jeremy.

Jeremy and Julia not only shared commonalities in regards to their racial identities and

experiences, but they were also able to support each other academically because they did not

share similar academic interests and therefore were not competing for similar resources within

the academy. The fact that they were able to rely on each other without fear of losing financial or scholarly opportunities to the other person made their ability to nurture their friendship much easier.

> We had different interests, and because we knew that, we were able to support each other and not feel threatened. And we knew that if someone was going to hire Jeremy, they wouldn't be interested in hiring me. He's a gay Black man, I'm a straight Latina. We're very different. And we have different things we're looking at in our methodologies, in our research and what we want to teach. So although we are seeking different degrees, we want to do different things. So he was wonderful because he was very supportive.

Julia's experience with her peers clearly illustrates how uneven funding packages and lack of resources to support doctoral students can breed competitive dynamics. She is very explicit in discussing how a lack of competition for similar resources facilitated her collegial relationship with Jeremy.

The Mentorship Experience

Julia had an excellent faculty mentor who provided assistance and the professionalization she needed to thrive during the doctorate and prove her racist institution wrong. Her faculty mentor understood the importance of professionalization, and made sure to share this information with Julia. One way in which she did so was in strongly encouraging Julia to participate in academic conferences in order to network with other academics and share her scholarly work.

> [Name of faculty mentor omitted] was excellent at this. She really really really pushed for conferences. The minute I got there [to the doctorate] she had me apply to conferences. I was like, what's the big deal with conferences? She was like you have to network, network. And it was useful. I started taking leadership positions at some of these conferences. They saw my leadership skills at some of these conferences. And that counts. And it was because of [faculty mentor name omitted] that I did this.

Her mentor's advice not only allowed her to present her work and become visible within academic networks, it also provided her a space where she could meet other Latina scholars

facing similar challenges and pursuing like-minded goals. It was in these spaces that she met

peers who not only understood and validated her experiences as a Latina within the academy, but

who provided emotional support in the form of friendship.

> Conferences are also important for networking. At one conference I met this woman who
> is my kindred soul; she's me on the West Coast. And we've been able to support each
> other, we've had similar struggles, going through similar things, and we're there for each
> other. It's been wonderful.

In addition to teaching Julia the importance of participating in conferences, her faculty mentor

also encouraged her to begin thinking about her post-doctoral career very early in Julia's Ph.D.

program. During Julia's very first year as a Ph.D. student, her mentor was already discussing the

academic job market with her, and providing her with suggestions on how to be marketable

within academia.

> So that first year, [name omitted] really pushed for that. The second year, she started
> pushing us to start applying for jobs. She looked at my CV and helped me change it
> completely. She looked at my letter and helped me. And that really helped, because that
> really helped me get job talks.

Knowing how to approach the academic job market is a learned skill, and one that is not easily

developed without the proper training and mentorship. Clearly, her faculty mentor's advice

served Julia well, as she was subsequently successful in obtaining academic employment.

Julia received instrumental support and guidance not only from her graduate advisor, but

also from other faculty members, as well as peers she met outside of her home department. Julia

took courses outside of her department in order to expand her horizons as well as to access other

scholars of color conducting similar research. Because she possessed a Master's Degree upon

entering her doctorate, she had fulfilled several departmental course requirements and was

therefore able to enjoy a certain level of freedom in taking elective courses and exploring

academic work beyond her discipline. Julia felt she gained a great deal from this opportunity. "I

got to take courses outside of my department. Because I had gotten my Master's, I had already

taken a lot of courses within my program. So I was able to focus on other courses…So I was

able to take courses that were very different."

Julia not only enjoyed the freedom of exploring outside her academic discipline, she was

also challenged by discovering new academic theories and being introduced to a different

scholarly lens. This freedom pushed her to truly expand and move beyond her comfort zone.

Even when she was uncomfortable or unfamiliar with the material, Julia was proactive in seeking

support and in doing what was necessary to successfully tackle the challenge. She describes her

experiences in taking courses outside of her department:

> So I took this class in Critical Race Theory, and it was a completely different language. It took me like a month to understand what people were saying. So I approached the professor, and let him know, "I'm enjoying the class and doing all of the readings, but it feels like a different language." And he says, "it IS a different language." So he pulls out this book, a dictionary in American Studies and gives it to me to look at, to help me understand. Which I thought was great, instead of being like, "well drop the course." It was really great. I read them, and it all made sense.

This professor's response to Julia's struggle with the course material is illustrative of

instrumental support. He did not punish Julia for feeling challenged, but rather offered her

resources to facilitate her success and engagement in the class.

Not only did taking courses outside of her department expand Julia's academic prowess,

she also met additional allies and peers who served as sources of emotional and instrumental

support.

> And I took courses in Sociology. I met some great people that I'm still in touch with. This guy, who I'm still in touch with… He's almost done. And we send messages to each other, we support each other. Which is a wonderful thing. I've met a few people in Critical Race class, I still keep in touch with. I've been taking these courses that are mind blowing. I've been taking this course with [name of professor omitted], and now he's on my dissertation. So, right there. Just outside of my field…I was able to take really amazing courses. I've had really really great professors.

Julia's journey during the doctorate has been filled with challenges and triumphs. She began her Ph.D. knowing she was not welcome as a Latina, and feeling the lack of support from her department financially. Her peers were sometimes hostile and racist. She knew obtaining the doctorate would be an uphill battle. While Julia was resourceful in navigating the challenges she faced by finding allies, seeking instrumental and emotional support, and creating opportunities for herself, the lack of institutional support is significant in her post-doctoral career. The lack of financial support forced her to focus on ways to fund her education, including teaching. Teaching as an Adjunct Instructor demands time and energy, time and energy taken away from building skills valued in Research Intensive Institutions. Thus, similarly to Sandra, Julia received a great deal of training during the Ph.D., but not necessarily in skills valued at Research 1 universities. Julia is a tenure track faculty member in academia at a community college. Community colleges are extremely important spaces of learning where teaching is highly valued. But again, Julia's experience begs the question, given a different doctoral socialization experience, would she have been more likely to pursue a career in a Research Intensive Institution? How did her experiences around racism impact her educational and professional trajectory?

<center>**Lucia**</center>

Lucia applied to several graduate programs, mostly Master's programs and one program that would allow her to obtain the Master's en route to the Ph.D. She was admitted to all of the programs she applied to, and ended up selecting the program with the doctorate option. Additionally, she was offered four years of full funding for the doctoral program, which made it even more appealing.

Prior to beginning her graduate application process, Lucia had been given the opportunity to do a summer pre-Ph.D. program. This program had exposed her to the premier conferences in her field, as well as had educated her on which were the top programs in her discipline. Thus, she felt she had a good idea of which programs she should apply to, and when she applied and was admitted to an elite program in her discipline, she felt she was making a wise choice in accepting the offer.

In addition to considering prestige in her process of selecting a graduate program, she also benefitted from the wisdom of her father's own experience during the doctorate. A key piece of advice he had given her was to find a program where she would receive a great deal of support and mentorship. Her father had warned her that finding a supportive mentor was crucial to successfully navigating the doctorate, and she considered this when choosing a program. Lucia describes the rationale behind selecting her Ph.D. program:

> I just wanted to work with people who were vaguely doing research in what I was interested in. I was really keen on being in a program that I felt I was going to get a lot support in. Because my dad had told me about his experience, and how having a really bad experience with an advisor can totally blow it. So yeah, I wanted a place that was safer.

However, despite the advice she received from her father and the information she had received from her pre-Ph.D. summer program, Lucia ended up in a doctoral program that did not meet her needs. One key factor in her feelings of dissatisfaction with her graduate program was

<center>144</center>

the lack of colleagues she felt she could relate to within her cohort. Her cohort was small, with four students, including herself. All of her cohort members were married, and already had children, or were in the process of starting a family. Lucia was significantly younger than her peers, was single, and did not have children. Additionally, she was the only Latina in her program. In terms of gender representation, there was one other woman in her cohort. She eventually developed a close relationship with her, but it took several years for her to be able to do so. She describes feeling disconnected from her peers:

> At the time, one cohort member was in a long distance relationship, and another one had just gotten married and they started having children soon after, and then [colleague's name omitted] had his five kids. So I was in a very very different place than them, and we were not close at all. I would say now, I am decently close to the other woman, but that took 4 years.

In addition to not having a close relationship with her colleagues, she also felt they were not very collaborative in sharing resources and supporting each other academically. As she describes it, "We did not really help each other at all." Lucia felt isolated and overwhelmed during the first few years of the doctorate. Her living situation during her first few years of graduate school exacerbated her feelings of isolation in navigating the Ph.D.

> I lived in the dorms, which was really weird, because it was like undergrads and grads [graduate students] in the same dorms. So that was kind of awkward. So my life was just, my office was across the street, and I would just stay there until 3 in the morning, then cross the street and go to bed, and do it all again the next day.

> The dorm was very very expensive to live in. And so a lot of graduate students wouldn't live there. The grad [graduate] students that were in my suite, they tended to be international students, sometimes I got someone who was nice, but I ended up making friends with some undergrads.

Lucia did eventually find support from colleagues and found a social network when she began taking classes outside of her division. There, she was able to forge personal relationships with other academics.

> The support system that I ended up getting, in some of the MPH classes that I ended up taking, I made friends with other public health students that were not in my division. And we had a pool group and we would go every Thursday night to a bar and play pool. And that was really nice, like one of the guys took it upon himself to kind of herd us and make us go. Everybody that was in that group, I am very close with to this day.

Finding that social network helped mitigate the feelings of isolation she had felt when she first began her doctoral program.

The Mentorship Experience

In addition to facing challenges in finding a support system from colleagues within her own cohort, she also had difficulty finding an advisor she felt understood her research interests. Her departmental structure and requirements around advisement contributed to this dynamic. Lucia describes this frustrating setup: "I didn't really get to choose my advisor, my advisor chose me. My department gave us guidelines about the kind of committee we would form. I chose them based on those guidelines." This was particularly problematic for her because she ended up with an advisor who was not only a poor match for her, but that proved to be a hindrance for progress during the Ph.D.

> The relationship I've had with my advisor. Meh, I would say, he can be really nice, but he's just kind of inept in many ways, and it's just very frustrating. So we just do not communicate well at all. That's one reason why everybody else in my cohort has graduated, and I'm still here. And it's my cross to bear. And politically, I just can't change.

Lucia feels the poor communication with her advisor as well as differences in their political ideologies have seriously created obstacles in her advancing in a timely manner towards completing her Ph.D. In addition to ideological differences, it seems personality conflicts with him have made her mentorship experience a tenuous one. She describes the multiple ways in which she feels her advisor has been an inadequate match for her and her scholarly goals:

> For starters, nobody in my division knows my topic, like what I'm doing for my division. With him [my doctoral committee chair], most of the other faculty in the department

146

don't like him either. They went crying to the Dean and got him removed as [Department] Chair. So he's very very unpopular.

I don't face this problem with anybody else. So I can explain to faculty outside my division in 5 minutes, the elevator schpeel, like what my dissertation is on. And yet, with him, he just couldn't get it, like just didn't understand.

As a result of the situation, Lucia has had to be strategic about how to navigate such challenges,

including garnering support from the remainder of her doctoral committee members.

So what I ended up doing anyway is I basically just go to my other committee members and get them to help me.

I had to go around him [my dissertation chair] and the new Chair [of the department] met with me and said of course, you have to have [discipline/theory omitted] in your dissertation. So we had to have a big meeting to basically get that approved. So I had get the rest of the faculty to say yes, and then he had to like cave. But part of the problem is that he didn't understand why my dissertation question is actually relevant to put some kind of [discipline/theory omitted] angle to it. So it took forever for him to get that [laughs].

Lucia also feels the lack of structure and lack of organization within her department have

also made navigating the doctorate quite difficult. She describes her experience with her

qualifying exams as an example of the programmatic dysfunction within her program:

My qualifying exams, that was at the end of the first year. My department hadn't had a Ph.D. program in years, so this was their first attempt at writing a qualifying exam in years, and it was very poorly put together. They basically wrote a single question for every subject area… Every question was supposed to take an hour to complete. Faculty had clearly not gotten anybody to look over their questions. And so, nobody passed [laughs].

In fact, Lucia was the only person within her cohort to pass the exams, but due to programmatic

issues, she was forced to retake the exams with the rest of her cohort.

I was the only one that passed. I think out of the five I had to answer, I passed four out of the five. But because nobody had passed, and I guess they were embarrassed, instead of saying that was an actual fail, they said, "Well, we're just going to reopen the exam." Which I don't think is quite kosher, against university rules, but that's what they ended up doing.

This departmental error was significantly burdensome for Lucia, and she had to endure the

consequences of a poorly managed program. This challenge adversely affected her mental

health.

> It was a horrible time. Because I was telling you, the exam was done at the end of the
> summer. And for me, I was taking 20 credits, so for me, to have to restudy for the
> qualifying exam while taking 20 credits was just not pleasant at all.

> And one thing, throughout all of this, I have a counselor, and a psychologist. And that at
> that point, they ended up having to prescribe some medication to me because I was
> having panic attacks, it was awful, awful. I had to basically study the whole thing. When
> they reopened it and we retook it, then we all passed.

> This is a clear example of how structural dysfunctions within a graduate program can

personally impact graduates students. Lucia fell victim to administrative problems within her

department, and did not have anyone to really advocate on her behalf and protect her from the

negative repercussions of a disorganized qualifying exam process.

> Despite programmatic challenges and conflicts with her doctoral committee Chair, she

has received encouragement from particular faculty members, while also acknowledging that she

has felt like a "guinea pig" in the type of guidance she has received.

> The other females, there are two females in my committee. The one in my
> department, she's probably been the most helpful and the most encouraging in
> getting me out [completing the doctorate]. And she and the chair [of the
> department] have expressed that a lot of why I'm still in my Ph.D. program is
> because of my advisor and because of my department. So, they could have
> focused me in on a topic a little bit quicker, and not let me get another Master's in
> [discipline omitted], and so it's their learning curve and I'm just their guinea pig
> and it just happens and they've learned from it.

Lucia has been able to find some allies within faculty which have provided not only instrumental

support, but also emotional support and guidance.

> The female committee member that's in my department, she's someone that I'm
> really close with. And there is another female faculty member in my division, her
> name is Sandra. They are, I would say, as much of a professor as a friend,
> someone I can go to for advice.

Lucia describes these mentors as not only professors, but friends. Like many other participants

in this study, she truly values that she is able to go to this faculty member for advice and

guidance around how to navigate the doctoral system without judgment or fear.

The Cooling Out Function in the Doctorate

Lucia came in to the doctorate definitely wanting to teach at a Research Intensive

Institution, and she has essentially been cooled out of that goal. Her interactions with scholars

and the multiple challenges she has faced in the Ph.D. have largely contributed to her cooling out

process. While she would still like to pursue a profession in higher education, she is clear that a

Research Intensive Institution is not where she will have her career.

> The idea of working with crazy academics is not really appealing. So at this point I feel like if I did go into, like I love the university setting, I like learning a lot and challenging myself. So if I did go, I would want to go to a university that is not an R1 to teach, and be more focused on teaching than on research.

Additionally, Lucia describes how she has witnessed the treatment of other women of color in

these spaces, how witnessing their struggles and the impact of the academy on them has also

deterred her from wanting a career at a Research Intensive Institution.

> One of the faculty members I'm close with, she just got Full [Professor], but I mean she's kind of like an island, like there isn't anyone in our division that can be a colleague for her, like a natural colleague.

> And so, yeah, I guess I was like a student observer of the faculty meetings and stuff, and so it's surprising. It's still like an old boys club, and even the female faculty that I've met and gotten to know in different departments. Like there's one that told a bunch of us, that to get tenure or going from Assistant to Associate she basically had to make the decision of getting tenure or getting divorced. And so she chose to get divorced and get tenure.

Lucia has seen how elite Research Intensive universities seem to favor men, and how the

sacrifices women are asked to make for professional success are not desirable to her. She has

observed how obtaining success in the professorate at a Research Institution may require her to

make choices about the type of personal life she may have, choices she isn't willing to make.

Additionally, based on her observations, she feels that in order to achieve tenure and status

within academia, she would have to alter who she is as a person, or accept being treated poorly.

> I see that the faculty, more men than the women, they just treat women differently. If
> you want to be a faculty member, two that I'm friends with, she's more senior, but it's
> because they stand up for themselves and they come across bitchy. And the other male
> faculty would probably say that. But the thing is if they didn't do that, they would just be
> walked all over. So there's another faculty member in our department and she's
> new…she's just very meek and kind of does whatever she's told. And yeah, that doesn't
> appeal to me at all [laughs].

In witnessing the treatment of female faculty, Lucia feels pursuing the professorate in a Research

Intensive Institution would require her to confront misogyny regularly, another choice she is not

willing to make.

Lucia's tenuous doctoral experience has definitely impacted her desire to pursue a career

in the professorate, and specifically within a Research Intensive Institution. She is a passionate

and skilled educator, she has been recognized for her teaching abilities and her ability to impact

students. But, due to the politics, gendered and racial dynamics she has witnessed during the

doctorate, she is certain she would never pursue a tenure track faculty position in an institution

such as her doctoral institution. Her own experiences, as well as those that she has witnessed in

other women of color, have led her to make these choices.

> Yeah, I would say I definitely came in wanting to do that [pursue the professorate at a
> Research Intensive Institution]. So part of the back story is I've been a teacher for over
> ten years. Even in high school I taught refugees, like English and citizenship and then all
> through [undergraduate institution omitted] I taught in high schools in the area, so I love
> teaching and mentoring kids. I've taught high school, I've taught college, I really love
> teaching.

> And I got nominated this year at the university for their most prestigious grad student
> teaching award, which I should hear back from soon, which comes with a prize of 1500
> dollars. So I really really love teaching, and that's what I really want to do and what kind
> of draws me into academia.

Lucia is such a skilled and dedicated instructor that her doctoral institution has rewarded this. However, her pursuit of a scholarly career in a Research Institution has been derailed by her negative doctoral socialization experience. In her case, it is clear that the pipeline from the Ph.D. to a Research Institution was disrupted due to her negative experiences around mentorship and support. The lack of guidance and proper mentorship students like Lucia experience in the Ph.D. not only hurt the students, it is also a loss for Research Intensive Institutions and students of color who attend these and would benefit from women of color faculty role models.

Marisol

Marisol's transition into the doctorate was fairly seamless, as she was completing her Ph.D. in the same department as she pursued her Master's degree. Pursuing her Ph.D. in the same department allowed her to enter her doctoral journey with some familiarity regarding departmental culture, faculty advisors, and general graduate student expectations. As discussed in Chapter 4, she began finding her faculty mentors during her Master's degree, thus by the time she entered the doctorate, Marisol had already given some thought to the selection of her faculty advisors.

Marisol felt some frustration during her Master's degree regarding the level of guidance and academic support she had received from faculty mentors. Like most participants in this study, she felt she needed a bit more directed mentorship regarding how to navigate the academy. However, like other students, she found varied levels of mentorship from various faculty members. Marisol understood early on that her doctoral education would be "incredibly self-directed" in her particular program, and thus she knew she needed to be strategic about how to find the support she needed. As she describes it, "I knew the Ph.D. would be incredibly self-directed where I would need to make it work by moving beyond my program." Having this awareness early on allowed her to be proactive in seeking guidance.

The Mentorship Experience

Being creative and resourceful has been the running theme in Marisol's doctoral education. She was fortunate enough to find a wonderful mentor outside of her department when she conducted an independent study with during her Master's degree. Marisol enjoys working with her for various reasons. She describes her as her "academic role model forever," because

152

this faculty member has shown her "unconditional academic love." Marisol describes the

multiple qualities she appreciates in this mentor:

> Anytime I've had a question about anything, she's giving me an answer and she's really helpful…She trusts me. And she wants me to do good work, and she knows that I can do good work. Every time that I've given her something, she gives me really good comments.

> She is encouraging, and she is interested. And she is a genuinely curious person who is invested in the success of others. And I really, I value that tremendously. And she's funny. She takes the material really seriously, but she doesn't take herself too seriously.

A key factor in her description of her mentor is this professor's lack of judgment and her

willingness to share information without penalizing Marisol for not knowing something. Her

"constructive criticism" is useful, while being encouraging. For example, Marisol describes a

situation with this mentor where she was facing personal difficulties which were affecting her

academic performance. She worried about disappointing this faculty member and about possibly

being penalized. The response she received from this faculty member reaffirmed why she felt so

comfortable with her:

> I took a course with her last Spring and basically totally choked on the Final Essay, and there were some other family circumstances, there were some personal circumstances, and I didn't feel like I could get something to her that was worth reading. And I told her that, and she was like, fine, get it to me when you can. I still haven't gotten it to her. And I've put off asking her to be on my Candidacy Committee because I was so embarrassed that it had been months and I was still thinking about this thing.

> And when I wrote to her [to check in and ask her to serve on my Doctoral Committee], and I was kind of hyperventilating when I wrote it, because it was like the shame, so much shame. She wrote back, and was like "Of course I'd love to serve on your committee; I'm so excited with what you've been up to with your research!!" And there were exclamation points. And I was like, [name omitted], I love you so much.

It's important to note that lack of judgment comes up as a significant quality when describing

good mentors. The need to be able to ask questions without fear of negative repercussions, and

the freedom to be able to ask for guidance without being punished, is essential for the success of doctoral students. As Marisol summarizes it:

> It's nice to have an academic relationship where I don't have to be fearful. I don't have to be fearful that they won't give me the feedback that I need, or fearful that I'm going to disappoint them, or what have you. So that's really good.

The ability to have a fruitful academic relationship without being stifled by fear has been significant in Marisol's academic growth.

In addition to the supportive guidance she has received from this mentor, Marisol was able to find other types of support within her department. She has been strategic in determining what she needs to navigate her graduate education, and has selected mentors accordingly. For example, her advisor for her Master's Thesis was useful in that she is "a reasonable person." While this may not sound like extremely high praise, it perhaps speaks to the difficulty of finding faculty mentors that are not unreasonable, unpredictable, or serve as a hindrance rather than a source of support during an often challenging process. Marisol elaborates on how she has made her choices:

> I'm sticking with my advisor from my Master's thesis. Honestly, because she is a reasonable person, maybe not super helpful, but also not going to be a hindrance. So it was a pretty kind of expedient decision. Because yeah, she's not going to get in my way.

This advisor hasn't been particularly helpful, but also "will not be a hindrance" to Marisol's progress. This illustrates Marisol's savvy about how to survive within her program. She knew what she was dealing with going into the Ph.D., so she figured out how to function within that system. Specifically, she understood the isolating and individualistic nature of the doctorate, and figured out how to navigate these obstacles. However, Marisol also understands the potential pitfalls of having to traverse this system without a great deal of guidance:

> In some ways it's kind of terrifying to do it very much on my own. But, you know, I have a chapter coming out in a book, which is great, I'm excited about that. I have

154

reached out to people within my area of interest, and they're all very excited about my work.

So maybe the isolation of graduate school has been intensified because the advisors in my department are so useless. Which is unfortunate. Particularly because without having the external validation of people that you trust, it's sort of like, "Oh my God, what if I've been doing it wrong this entire time?!"

While Marisol has figured out how to succeed during the doctorate despite isolation, it's still "terrifying," as she is basically navigating the system blindly, and hoping she is doing it correctly and hoping not to fall into major pitfalls. Marisol's experience mirrors the sentiment many doctoral students experience, the process of being in a program where they don't have all of the necessary tools and information to navigate it, and are gambling on the hope they are doing it correctly. The fear of failure is quite real for many doctoral students, as perfectly captured by Marisol: "[It's the fear of] I'm going to get out there, and people are going to be like "What?! Who let her do this? This is ridiculous."

However, despite the feelings of fear and isolation, Marisol has found other resources outside of her department to help support her in her scholarly pursuits. She joined a Latina/o graduate school organization during her Master's Degree that proved to be a great resource. Through this organization, she met other students with similar interests outside of her department who have supported her in the doctoral socialization process. For example, a colleague she met through this space invited her to co-author a publishable piece of writing, and it turned out to be her first academic publishing experience. It was through these external spaces that she found the socialization she was seeking.

When asked how she developed skills such as producing a publishable paper, she describes teaching herself how to do these things quite independently:

155

As far as actually knowing how to do these things, I looked at different calls for proposal, read articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education. And much in the same way I approached applying to college, I did research and figured it out.

In addition to finding external departmental resources, Marisol really credits her life partner with supporting her through the graduate education process. She has helped her be tactical in how to approach doctoral studies so she may be successful in her scholarly and professional pursuits.

My wife is also really helpful, in terms of thinking, "Ok, we want you to have the most [professional] opportunities possible, what do you need to do to be the candidate for anything? What do you need to develop professionally, what sorts of experience do you need to have academically, what do you need to do for teaching, etc?

Marisol's partner has been essential in guiding her to consider choices that will guarantee her success not just during the doctorate, but in her post-doctoral career as well. In some ways, having a partner outside of academia with an outsider perspective has been an invaluable tool in helping her think about how to best navigate the academy. For example:

Thinking about, not just how to be really good on paper, but how to present what you have on paper in a really compelling way and that fits your target audience. She's been really helpful in getting me to refine my skills in communicating. Like putting things together like cover letters, and making sure my resume is doing the best that it can for whatever it is I am applying for.

In addition to offering instrumental support, her partner has been essential in providing emotional support and in offering a more objective perspective through the doctoral journey. Marisol describes this:

It's probably a good thing that she's not in grad school right now. I don't know how people in academia stay together without falling into a depression for the rest of their lives. It's a lot of work. And it [academia] can be tremendously satisfying and it can also be really deeply lonely.

For Marisol, her partner's presence counteracts the isolating elements of the Ph.D.

In addition to benefitting from a supportive partner, Marisol has found allies in colleagues within her department, Marisol has been fortunate to have supportive colleagues, particularly within her cohort members.

The Cooling Out Function in the Doctorate

In some ways, Marisol's partner has served as an antidote for Marisol being entirely cooled out of the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions. While Marisol has felt a great deal of frustration and anxiety around the lack of guidance she has received during her doctoral socialization, she has also found some of that necessary mentorship in her partner. Her partner's foresight about Marisol's choices and her advice in navigating the Ph.D. has offered her some of the information her academic mentors would ideally be providing. Although she has found one particular advisor who has been supportive in both instrumental and emotional ways, the lack of mentorship and feedback received from others in her department has made her doctoral journey a challenging and frustrating one. At times Marisol has felt she has navigated her doctorate blindly, hoping she isn't making any major mistakes along the way. Having a savvy partner that provides emotional and structural support has helped to buffer some of Marisol's negative experiences in the doctorate. Thus, while she has not completely ruled out the possibility of a future career within academia, her negative experiences during the Ph.D. have colored her perspective, and she is also fully cognizant of some of the challenges a career in the professorate would entail.

Brenda

Brenda only applied to one doctoral program after extensively researching graduate

programs. She felt certain it was the Ph.D. program she wanted to attend, and decided to gamble

on being admitted to it.

> I thought, if this is in the cards for me, then I'm going to get accepted here, and if it's not
> in the cards for me, then maybe I'll try to reapply next year to other places. But this is
> what I really really wanted, and so I figured instead of applying to a lot places, as far as
> the application fees, I didn't really have the funds to pay all of the application fees to
> apply to all of the places that I thought that were interesting. So I thought I would put all
> of my eggs in one basket. I wouldn't necessarily encourage people to do so, because you
> want to be able to weigh all your financial aid packages, I know that now, to use as
> leverage. But at the time I was very green and didn't understand that, so I just applied to
> one.

Although Brenda admits that her graduate application process was perhaps not the most savvy or

strategic, luckily she was admitted into the program she applied to, and was able to pursue her

doctorate there. Brenda was really pleased when she was accepted, but her program did not offer

funding for a recruitment weekend for prospective students. She was expected to fund their own

travel and lodging to the recruitment weekend organized by the department. However, due to

financial challenges, this was not realistic for Brenda, and therefore visiting her prospective

program was not really an option. She describes her feelings around this process:

> I was very excited. Unfortunately, they didn't have the funding to pay to bring candidates
> for recruitment weekend…once you were accepted, they had a recruitment weekend with
> a schedule, but you were expected to sort of get yourself there. Um, that wasn't really an
> option for me. I was bartending, but I wasn't making that much money, and I lived on
> my own, so flying out to [another state, location omitted] for a few days just wasn't really
> an option at that point, so I just had phone calls, virtual tours of the campus, things like
> that. I guess I went into that blind too. I was very naïve and very excited, so I didn't go
> visit the campus before it was actually time for me to move there.

Brenda's inability to see her prospective graduate campus and get a sense of her doctoral

program before beginning is significant for multiple reasons. Recruitment weekends are events

organized by graduate programs which offer admitted students an opportunity to meet faculty in

the program, meet other admitted students that will potentially be their cohort mates, and get a

preview of the campus and community where they will be living. It is a chance to preview the

environment they will be a part of for the next several years, an opportunity to assess if they

could see themselves there and could succeed within that space, and it allows students to make

more educated choices regarding selecting their graduate programs. Although Brenda only

applied to the one doctoral department she was admitted to, having the ability to attend the

recruitment event would have allowed her to learn more about the program she would be

attending, the state she would be moving to, and to begin preparing mentally for such a

significant change in her life. She was about to embark in a new chapter in her educational

journey, and the more information she would have access to before this, the more empowered

she could be. Although she had a few alternative options for previewing her future program,

such as virtual tours or phone calls, these were all substandard choices in comparison to

physically being present in the recruitment weekend. Thus, when Brenda began her doctoral

studies, she moved to a city she had never been to on a campus she was not familiar with.

Once Brenda began her Ph.D. program, her first year in her doctoral studies was riddled

with many of the anxieties and tensions women of color face in graduate study. She felt

intimidated by her peers, and worried she was not as qualified to be in her graduate program as

her cohort members. Brenda felt unsure of herself, and invested a great deal of energy into

bolstering her academic skills.

> I was very overwhelmed by the feeling of, I guess people call, "the impostor syndrome."
> Very much feeling like, "do I really belong here?," "everyone else knows more than me,"
> "I don't know that I'm going to make it." And I spent most of my time in my room
> reading everything that I could get my hands on, everything, the books in the syllabus,
> everything that they cited, just trying to absorb as much information as I could so I
> wouldn't feel like an impostor, and I would feel like I knew enough to be there. And it
> was really scary that first year.

Brenda not only feared that she was not as prepared as her peers, she also feared that she would

not "make it," she feared not completing the program successfully or being removed from the

program. Brenda's method of coping was to augment her skills to battle some of the feelings of

inadequacy affecting her. Interestingly, when asked if she feels her colleagues were just better

prepared or more capable, she reflects on their behavior, and how they performed as confident

academics, but perhaps it was simply that, just a performance. However, at the time, their verbal

posturing was enough to make her question her own position within her program. In

remembering that first year, she muses, "I don't think my colleagues knew everything, but they

certainly acted like they did [laughs], and so I definitely felt like I had some catching up to do,

and it was very very overwhelming and very scary."

Parts of her feelings of insecurity were based in not only the verbal posturing by her

peers, but also in the competitive nature of her cohort. Initially, the climate amongst her peers

was a competitive[25] rather than cooperative one, and this was particularly palpable during course

discussions. Brenda describes them below:

> Yeah, I felt like in the beginning, it was pretty competitive…I would say that class time
> especially was a time when people were kind of, I guess trying to prove themselves, or
> speaking a lot about their own experiences and kind of trying to trump one another as far
> as, you know, some people did the reading, some people didn't, some people had
> experiences that were relevant to the class, and so would talk on about those. And
> sometimes they were [reasonable], but I feel like a lot of it was trying to establish a
> hierarchy to lord power over. And I'm not saying everybody, but I do find that that was
> the case quite a bit. And it was difficult.

Brenda describes these class dynamics as unspoken battles for power. In retrospect, she is able

to understand the nature and cause of these power dynamics, but when she was first confronted

with it, it was uncomfortable.

> Once you understand that people are coming from different places, and that those power
> dynamics are constantly shifting, it's different. But I think in the beginning everyone was

---

[25] The form of competition described here is a destructive, divisive form, not useful or productive competition.

trying to establish themselves. And so, it ended up being a little bit competitive in classes, especially.

Brenda's first year of doctoral study was an adjustment not only in regards to academics, but also in adjusting to a new social life far from her family and friends. She left everything that was familiar to her to pursue her dreams of a scholarly career, and with that change came multiple challenges. She describes that first year as one of the most difficult in her life. "I'd say it was probably one of the hardest years of my life, especially moving out there with no family or friends in the area. So I really really spent a lot of time in my room just studying and trying to kind of live up to that expectation of kind of knowing everything."

Although Brenda faced some obstacles in adjusting to her program and a new environment during her first year of doctoral study, she was able to eventually acclimate and find the sources of support she needed from her peers as well as academic mentors. She attributes her own emotional health as impacting her ability to forge relationships and find allies within her program. Although initially a divisive environment, eventually she and her colleagues found their comfort zones and the tensions and fear she initially felt subsided. It took her about a year to feel at ease and become acclimated not only to her program, but also her surroundings and her new community.

> Yeah, I felt like in the beginning, it was pretty competitive. Over the years, there were kind of cliques or factions that formed. So I'm very lucky to have made really good friends and really good colleagues through the six years that I was there. In the beginning, not so much.

Brenda recognizes that part of finding a supportive community was connected to her ability to accept and receive support and develop close personal friendships with her peers.

> I think it took about a year, to get really comfortable in my own skin, to get acclimated to [geographic location omitted], to feel like I knew at least a little bit. So I think by the second year I was open and available to have those kinds of friendships and welcome them. And we were able to learn from each other, to study together, to help each other, to

161

read one another's work, to talk about deadlines and to freak out the night before they were due together.

Being able to "learn from each other," having the support system to "study together" and "freak out" together was integral to Brenda's success in graduate school and her ability to navigate the doctorate fairly painlessly. She was able to lean on her colleagues for parts of doctoral socialization that are crucial in success within academia, they offered instrumental support. They also provided emotional support in sharing their anxieties with each other and feeling validated in their fears around succeeding. "So, yeah, I think the relationships were instrumental in actually making it through the program. I kind of retreated into hermit mode that first year, but was able to come beyond that." Brenda credits these relationships with actually getting through the program, the help she received helped empower her to have the resilience and know-how to meet the challenges entailed with the Ph.D.

In addition to obtaining assistance around the technical aspects of navigating the Ph.D., Brenda also found support from her peers in facing the challenges of being a person of color in a largely conservative and racially homogenous community. As students of color from working class backgrounds in a city where most residents were wealthy and white, it was impossible not to feel marginalized. While there was racial diversity on-campus, once she and her colleagues left campus, they were bombarded with racial inequalities in the surrounding community.

> When we went out into the greater area of the city, when you were downtown, for example, most of the faces that you saw were white, but most of the customer service workers were brown. And so that was a really interesting dynamic for us. Because on campus, we were sort of safe in our zone, we could relate to each other in certain kinds of cultural ways, but when we left campus, things changed quite a bit. People who look like us were usually behind the counter, were commuting into [name of city omitted] to work, because they couldn't afford to live in the city. So that was jarring for many of us, a lot of us who came from primarily Latina/Latino communities.

162

Originating from much more racially diverse communities, it was unsettling to be in an environment where Latinos were clearly a minority. Having each other was valuable in being able to process the feelings of exclusion and the experiences of racism that came from this, and as a result created a stronger relationship among Brenda and her peers. As she recalls, "We ended up being pretty close because of that, we could identify with one another." They provided emotional validation, as well as helped shield each other from negative racial dynamics. "In our department we were close, partially because of that shared sense of community, and we kind of tried to protect one another when we were out beyond campus."

Although Brenda eventually found a sense of community within her doctoral department, not all aspects of her Ph.D. experience were simple. One area which Brenda really struggled with during the doctorate was finding balance between her personal family obligations and her demands as a graduate student. She found it difficult to navigate the demands of a doctoral program and adapt to becoming a mother and wife.

> The most important challenge that I probably faced in my doctoral study was getting married and starting a family while I was a student. Just because, when I began the program, I was an individual, and I didn't have the responsibilities and commitments of family. And now, seven years later, when I'm about to file [my dissertation], I have a partner and small child.

Gaining a partner and child forced Brenda to adjust to a new way of life. As she recounted, when she began her doctoral program, she only had to worry about herself, most of her family lived far away, and she had much more freedom in her schedule to dedicate her time to her studies. Once she started a family, she had to learn how to meet her academic responsibilities while being present for her loved ones. She describes her struggle to find work-life balance during her graduate studies:

> My time has been really compartmentalized and things have changed quite a bit, and it's not as easy for me to devote an entire day just to writing and revising. Or, to spend

163

insane amounts of time in the library doing my research. I have to be very very strict about my schedule now, so I think that was probably the biggest challenge that I faced halfway through the program trying to completely reinvent myself as a scholar who also had a family and commitments that were just as important as career. So, you know, that was really difficult.

I've always been really committed to my parents and to my extended family, but to actually have my own was a completely different ball game. That's probably the biggest challenge that I didn't necessarily foresee in grad school. And it's been very rewarding, but also really hard.

Brenda was fortunate that her department was fairly accepting of women starting families while pursuing careers in the academy. She was not the only one of her peers or mentors to have children and juggle family and professional demands.

There were examples of women in the department who had children, women and men who had children. And you would see the children periodically around, and it was a normal thing to see children around. And so, I wouldn't say that it was necessarily looked on negatively by the people who were in my circle.

Although Brenda felt that the presence of children and women with families was a fairly accepted within her department and her immediate circle of colleagues and mentors, she knew this was not necessarily the case within the larger space of academia.

However, I couldn't speak to what the people without families were thinking or what that might look like in a department meeting. So I don't know how the other faculty or the greater campus community look on my pregnancy, because I can only speak to the people who I surrounded myself with who were very encouraging...I didn't feel like the department overall necessarily had a problem with pregnancy. I think individual faculty members are a different story though.

Brenda alludes to the fact that while she did not receive overt messages of disapproval of her pregnancy, there may have been individual faculty members who may not have looked so kindly on her choice to start a family.

The Mentorship Experience

Brenda had selected her graduate program partly due to the presence of a faculty mentor she had the desire to work with, and fortunately, she benefitted from a successful mentorship relationship with this professor. She describes her experience of mentorship:

> Well, I had specifically wanted to work with this one professor who was very well known, and who I had a lot of respect for. I asked her to be my advisor, and that was fantastic. She was very supportive, she still is. I'm coming near the end of my dissertation editing at this point, I should be filing in a few months. And she's been fantastic from the beginning.

> I went in wanting to work with her, and our relationship really blossomed well over that 6 years. I worked as a Research Assistant for her for a while, so that was great. And she was always open and available for questions and she met with me all the time. So yeah, I was very lucky to have her.

When asked what qualities made this mentor "supportive" and "fantastic," she identified several characteristics which she found valuable in this faculty member's style of mentorship. One key feature in her positive relationship with her mentor was this faculty member's availability, her being accessible and available for guidance and assistance. Additionally, her mentor provided emotional support in the form of encouragement. A common theme in this dissertation is the role of encouragement as essential for effective mentorship, and Brenda is no exception. She feels reassurance was one of the two most valuable resources she received from her mentor.

Another area of mentorship Brenda found valuable was professional development. Her faculty mentor provided her with the tools and know-how to not only navigate the doctorate, but to do so in ways that would ensure success and longevity within the academy.

> She was really good in providing professional development. She was a great mentor in terms of my skills. In terms of my future career, she was encouraging. And so, that was probably the two best things that she gave me. Encouragement and looking intensely at my writing and research skills. And just, the small things. Like how do you write an academic article. What resources are available to you. You need to go to conferences, things like that, how to be a scholar.

As most participants in this study have discussed, professional development is a key factor in determining success within doctoral study. Brenda describes "the small things" that this mentor taught her, but it was these very details that helped her understand the steps she needed to take and the resources she needed to pursue in order to successfully navigate the Ph.D. Brenda summarizes it perfectly in stating that this mentor taught her "how to be a scholar." This advisor offered her the unwritten rules that are the key to thriving in academia, and she found this mentor valuable due to the level of professional development she provided her. One source of frustration for many doctoral students is the lack of professionalization and preparation for post-doctoral careers offered during the Ph.D. She was fortunate enough to have a mentor who also understood the value of being equipped to navigate the academy after completing the doctorate. When asked specifically what type of professional development she received, she responded:

> I'm talking about getting a job. I think that's the one glaring omission, if not the most glaring omission in graduate programs. I have friends and colleagues in graduate school across the nation and I've heard that a lot of them don't do this [type of professional development]. And I feel like our department is just starting to do things like that, but it would have been really helpful to have those sorts of workshops from the beginning. Like "How Do You Write a CV," "How Do You Publish," you know, how do you get ready to be on the tenure track job market. So, again, they are starting to do that.

Brenda is aware of how valuable professionalization is in successfully obtaining an academic position, and how unique her experience is in obtaining this level of mentorship. She learned the value of professionalization and the danger of not receiving proper training around these skills early on in her graduate career when she applied for a grant without seeking guidance from a faculty mentor.

> I remember the first time that I applied for funding through one of the centers on campus. I sent it out, and at the same time that I sent it, I sent it to my advisor. And she ended up emailing me back immediately and said, "Ok, this is not what a grant proposal looks like, it's supposed to look like this, this and this." I was then struck with fear, of like, oh my God, what did I do? So I went and retrieved my application back from the center, because I had sent it off, not knowing what I was supposed to be doing. So that was a very naïve mistake. And it was very early. I think it was probably the second month that

I was there. And so, I think that after that, I was sort of scared of figuring out what I needed to do. I ended up revising the application; I ended up getting funding, so that was that.

In this experience, Brenda was fortunate to have had an advisor who responded in a timely manner and who gave her clear guidance on how to properly write a grant proposal. She was also lucky that she was able to retrieve her application and resubmit it properly. But, the lesson was not lost on her, she understood there are set of unwritten rules within the academy that she was not aware of, and her faculty mentors were key players in giving her access to these rules.

Forms of knowledge and skills such as knowing how to write a CV and how to publish are developed through apprenticeship, they require a certain level of training. As she describes it, it is a "glaring omission" in many doctoral programs that professional development is not offered. If most doctoral programs in research intensive institutions are designed to train future faculty members who will theoretically enter the academic job market and will successfully obtain academic positions, it seems obvious that doctoral programs would train students in not only how to conduct research and write a dissertation, but also how to transition into the next phase of their academic careers.

In addition to her primary faculty mentor, Brenda also found a positive working relationship with another faculty member outside of her department. While working as a Teaching Assistant (T.A.), she had the opportunity to collaborate with other scholars outside of her program, and she found herself wanting to expand the breadth of her research. Brenda discusses this mentorship relationship:

I also forged a relationship with another woman from a different department, because I was her T.A. So being a T.A. for her I recognized how important her material was that she was teaching, and her publications. And I really admired her as a scholar, so I asked her to be on my committee as well. So that was great.

In this case, being a Teaching Assistant served her by not only providing training in teaching, it also introduced her to new scholarship and new mentors. She was able to forge relationships with new faculty, and expand her work into interdisciplinary scholarship.

Although Brenda enjoyed successful relationships with various faculty mentors, she also faced challenges with one faculty member she initially had as one of her mentors. Due to ideological differences, Brenda did not have a productive connection to this scholar, and was eventually faced with the decision to end that mentorship relationship. This was not an easy process for her, and she felt the repercussions of this choice for quite some time. Brenda recounts the difficult process and her reasoning for making this move:

> I actually had to make a change in one of my committee members because I went in thinking this person was going to be a really great fit for me. Then I found out that wasn't necessarily the case. Being a woman of color and feminist scholar, our ideas did not match up. This person is from a **different** generation, and we definitely, we're not on the same page about a lot of things. So that was kind of, a little bit hairy for a couple of years, just trying to kind of move on from that.

Brenda was self-aware enough to understand what she wanted and needed in a mentor. When asked why the mentorship relationship did not work, she identified various specific factors that impeded a successful mentor/mentee relationship for her, including political beliefs and disciplinary perspectives. As a woman of color, she was clear she wanted to produce scholarship with a feminist of color lens, and needed mentors with the disciplinary lens to do so. Brenda further describes the lack of connection she felt with this particular faculty mentor:

> The main thing that didn't work out about that mentorship was that I was really looking at my work through a woman of color feminist lens, and this scholar was not inclined to take that approach. He was very much a formalist, and that did not work and was not in line with my research interests. And so, that was very difficult. And so it just ended up not being the right fit. So, I had to look for someone who was going to understand and encourage that part of my scholarship, which was so integral.

168

In order to pursue the academic research she desired, Brenda realized that one of the qualities she needed in a mentor was possessing similar political ideologies. She discusses this realization:

> I really wouldn't have been able to pursue what I'm trying to do in my scholarship, without looking at it through feminism of color. So it just wasn't in line with my research interests. It just didn't work, in terms of what I wanted my scholarship to do. Overall, I think it didn't work out because my scholarship and their scholarship are not concerned with the same kind of women of color feminist concerns.

When describing this situation, Brenda became visibly angry. Interestingly, until she began discussing this experience during our conversation, she had been very composed and even keel. During this part of the conversation, her tone became sharp and edgy. It was physically visible how challenging this experience must have been for her, and that she still had strong feelings about what she went through with this faculty member. It literally took "years" for her to "move on" from leaving this mentorship relationship. Although Brenda would not elaborate specifically how this academic "breakup" affected her, she repeatedly expressed that the termination of this advisor/advisee relationship was a difficult one that haunted her for quite a bit of time. Her experience points to the delicate nature of navigating mentor/mentee relationships, and the potential pitfalls of a negative or failed relationship. When Brenda felt she wasn't receiving the mentorship she needed, she was brave enough to make a courageous decision. Choosing to change mentors and "divorcing" oneself from a faculty mentorship relationship can be a risky endeavor, as it involves possibly upsetting a faculty member and potentially creating an enemy with a person of power within the academy. The consequences and fall out of this type of conflict could literally derail a graduate student's career. Thus, while advocating for herself in her education, Brenda also had to negotiate political dynamics. In spite of dealing with this obstacle, she found support from other faculty members to step in as a doctoral committee

member and fill the void left by the problematic faculty mentor. She was able to find the specific kind of support she was seeking, and get her needs met as a mentee.

Brenda also understood that her faculty mentors would not always be available or as proactive as she needed in providing necessary professionalization, and therefore she sometimes had to learn through experience, and she also sought guidance from external resources and her peers. She recounts this learning process:

> **Trial and error** had a lot to do with it. I also tried to use the resources on campus through Graduate Division as much as I could. You know, go to their funding workshops, the different kinds of online resources they had for the Graduate Division, so they helped a lot in terms of figuring out how to write a grant proposal, and ways to look for funding, so that was pretty good.

In order to successfully navigate the various hurdles and stepping stones that are part of the doctorate, she also turned to her colleagues for support. For example, in preparation for qualifying exams, she and her peers relied on each other and created systems of instrumental support for each other.

> Yeah, we definitely had study groups, for sure. We would talk about the books, study together. We would write Prezis together. We would edit each other's work, each other's scholarship, so we would ask about the different readings and the overarching theoretical arguments in our field. Studying was really important. We were all taking them [qualifying exams] around the same time. So it was good to be able to springboard off each other and study together. Obviously, we had our own reading lists as well, but the overarching theories and text and questions sort of overlapped. So it was great to be able to talk with one another, and support each other in that way.

Even when their research interests varied, they were still able to share ideas and provide feedback for each other. The fact that they were all going through the same experience of navigating the challenges of the Ph.D. meant they understood what they were going through and provided support and comradery.

170

On Not Being Cooled Out

Overall, Brenda's experience within her doctorate program has been fairly positive. When she began the Ph.D., she entered with the intentions of pursuing a career in the professorate. Brenda's desire to teach in the professorate was influenced by her mother's career as a teacher, as well as a desire to make an impact in the lives of students with her work. When asked if she entered the doctorate with the intention of becoming a professor, Brenda emphatically responded:

> Yeah, [when I began the Ph.D.] I did want to be a Professor. I really have enjoyed being in the classroom. And with my mother being a teacher, I saw what a great impact that she had in students' lives. I was really keen to be part of the teaching community. I also really enjoy writing. So I thought, the publication aspect of being a scholar was really in line with my interests as well. So, yeah, I think being a professor was part of the appeal in the beginning. Just thinking that I really want to be doing research and being in the classroom.
>
> Now that I know more about what that looks like in terms of Research I or small Liberal Arts Colleges, I see that it's kind of a balancing act. But, in the beginning, I definitely was intrigued by both the teaching and the research aspects of academia.

Her journey within the doctorate has not cooled her out of this goal. Her graduate studies have allowed her to explore and develop the skills needed for the professorate, including conducting research and teaching. If anything, it seems Brenda's doctoral socialization has reaffirmed her desire to work within the professorate. Her graduate education has also enabled her to better understand the different types of institutions she would pursue her career in, allowing her to make a more informed choice in the future. As she has become more informed about the demands and specifics of the different institutions of higher learning, she is trying to consider her options and think about her goals for her future career. Brenda is considering the quality of life she would like in her future, and how working at a particular institution would affect this.

> Research Institutions obviously place more emphasis on research and Liberal Arts Colleges more on teaching, and Liberal Arts Colleges are quite different in what you're

171

expected to do to get tenure. Depending on where you land, your job may look very different.

Brenda is still grappling with where she wants to "land" in regards to working in an educational institution. She is clear that the academic job market is currently tenuous, and thus part of where she "lands" is dependent on where she is able to find employment. However, she is also still considering which type of institution would be most rewarding for her.

> Well, it's kind of, it's a question that I'm sort of grappling with right now, I'm on the job market, and I'm ABD [All But Dissertation], and this year has been really about trying to figure that out. And it's not a question that I've answered yet. I think that I see the drawbacks and the exciting things about both of them. And, even community colleges as well, because I think they have a lot of really important interventions into first generation college students and marginalized communities with people who are going to get their associates degree and transferring. I think that's an important place as well. I'm not quite sure, to be honest. I don't have a good answer for that.

Although uncertain of where she would like to eventually work, she is clear about the impact she would like to have on others. For Brenda, it is imperative that her work positively influences students of color and first generation students. Like many of the other participants in this study, she sees her presence in the academy as an opportunity to create change and open doors for underrepresented students. Brenda is fortunate that she received the socialization and support needed during the doctorate to feel empowered in seeking a career in the professorate, including Research Intensive Institutions.

<center>**Sonia**</center>

<center>**The Mentorship Experience**</center>

Sonia has been blessed with multiple resources and mentors during her Ph.D., which has benefitted her doctoral socialization process. As fate would have it, an unfortunate turn of events led her to develop a relationship with a mentor who would prove to be a powerful ally in her graduate education. The faculty member who had been her advisor during her Master's education passed away during the time she was researching doctorate programs where she was interested in applying. This loss led her to expand her horizons and explore other faculty members who were conducting research in her field of interest. As she was exploring options for potential doctoral advisors, she was able to connect with a faculty member via phone, and the success of this conversation led her to apply to a particular Ph.D. program and pursue this faculty member as her doctoral mentor. Despite the fact that this professor did not share the same cultural or ethnic identity, Sonia saw her as a true "ally" and a source of support. She describes the turn of events below.

> So as I was looking at schools, I had a phone conversation with her, and we talked for over an hour. It was wonderful, and she was very supportive, she's been a wonderful support. The word I would use for her is an ally. She is a white European woman.

Sonia's characterization of this faculty member as an ally is notable for various reasons. She describes this faculty member as an ally as a white woman, but also perhaps as a supporter in helping her navigate the system of academia. Although not a woman of color, this professor understood that Sonia's identity as a Latina scholar in a Research Intensive Institution would affect her journey as a doctoral student and academic. Her mentorship style was largely shaped by this understanding, and led this mentor to challenge Sonia and hold high expectations for her in order to protect Sonia. The form of mentorship this faculty member has provided is intensely demanding, but consciously so.

<center>173</center>

> She pushes me to be a strong scholar. I feel like from day one, she's like, "Sonia, I don't want people to discount you because you are a Latina scholar. I'm going to push you harder than I push anybody else." She told me from day one "I don't want people to dismiss you or think you are doing fluffy, cute stuff." So, it's been rigorous, it's been rigorous. It's been like baptism by fire. She is an intense person. She's a strong woman, I respect her a lot and I think it's going to make me stronger in the end. Yeah, she was very upfront about that from the very beginning.

Her mentor was well aware that being a woman of color in the academy is not easy, and thus very deliberately pushed her to do well in order to confront some of those obstacles. From day one, her mentor knew she would face challenges, and was transparent in letting her know she would push her hard to overcome some of the potential stigma in the academy. While this means that at times it has been particularly difficult for Sonia, perhaps having that ally has also given her certain privileges and tools to navigate academia.

In addition to having a fiercely protective mentor, she has also benefitted from being connected to an external program designed to support and mentor emerging Latina/o scholars in her field. This program [name omitted] specializes in providing various forms of mentorship to ensure the success of Latina/os within the doctorate. Through this organization, she has received a great deal of the doctoral socialization needed to navigate the Ph.D. Sonia describes the incredible value of her membership in this program:

> They are like a mentoring and scholarship organization. So they support scholars with scholarships, and they have a summer program where we get mentored by other Latino scholars. So they come to [name of institution omitted] and they give us tips on how to navigate the academy, how to get your dissertation published, how to present at a conference. Really practical, wonderful amazing mentoring. And so I'm part of that program, which I'm very very grateful to be a part of. I don't know if I could survive the Ph.D. without it.

Sonia is part of an organization that has essentially deciphered the tools of navigating academia. Through an external resource outside of her Ph.D. program, she has received the very socialization that most doctoral students have described in this study as essential for

174

guaranteeing success in the academy. Sonia's comment that "could survive the Ph.D. without it" is quite significant. She acknowledges the value and power in having this mechanism of support in facilitating the doctoral socialization process. Sonia mirrors what most participants in this study have expressed, the need for detailed and specific guidance in navigating the Ph.D., and the frightening prospect of having to navigate the doctorate blindly and without a roadmap.

Additionally, this external graduate mentorship program has not only provided her with the "unwritten rules" of succeeding with the Ph.D., but has also served as a system of support in holding her accountable in her academic performance. She has literally benefitted from an entire team of academics who are guiding her progress, encouraging her success, and providing feedback and parameters for her to follow. For example, this program monitors her academic progress to ensure she is "on track" and progressing in her Ph.D. in a timely and productive manner.

> …part of that is they have to meet with my deans and advisors, so that we are all on the same page. They check in on me once a semester to make sure I am doing well, if there's any issues, any problems, etc etc. They are really amazing. This organization is amazing. And I'm so happy to have their support, because through them, I've had access to the top U.S. Latino academics [scholarly field omitted], that I read at undergrad that I admired… Their support has been critical, their support has been important for my making good progress and having a positive Ph.D. experience.

Sonia feels this program is valuable not only in encouraging her to progress successfully in her doctorate, but that she have a "positive Ph.D. experience." This is significant in the context of this study, as many participants who did not have access to adequate doctoral socialization not only expressed frustration in feeling ill prepared, but also express overall negative feelings around facing multiple subsequent challenges during the doctorate. In Sonia's experience, exposure to necessary doctoral socialization is directly linked with the quality of experience during the Ph.D.

Individual initiative in seeking out resources is a common theme in ensuring doctoral success. Sonia was no different in this respect. During her Master's program, she had heard about this mentorship program, and made sure to pursue membership within it once she entered the doctorate. Early on, she fully understood the value of having a support system like the one offered in the mentorship program, and was very proactive in ensuring she would be able to benefit from the resources it had to offer. Additionally, she had witnessed one of her mentors enjoy a fruitful relationship with this same organization, and this really spurred her conviction to become involved with it as well.

> I actively sought them [name of program omitted] out, I could tell that this was really a golden opportunity, and [name omitted], my mentor, had had a lot of success through that affiliation with the program, so I kept that on my radar and I wanted to make sure that I got plugged in through them, and it's been really really really great.

Thus, even before her doctorate she had heard of this program, sensed it was great opportunity, and pursued it. The importance of mentorship is significant here, as she was able to tap into a network that provided that professionalization. This program worked to demystify the process for Latina students in particular academic disciplines.

This organization was not only valuable because of the quality of services it provided, but also because the level of support she received from colleagues in her program was minimal. Albeit, Sonia's distant relationship with her colleagues and her campus was partially by design, as she has been strategic in creating some boundaries between her and her program. For example, she has always been a "commuter," never fully immersing herself in the culture of her school campus. Additionally, she has been very intentional in creating a support system for herself outside of the academy, allowing for some balance in her life between academia and the world outside.

> I would say the interesting thing is that I've always been a commuter, I've never lived in [location omitted], I've always lived in [a different location than my institution] because I'm a city girl through and through. Growing up in [location omitted], I really like variety, the business of a city…I definitely like social time, I'm definitely a work hard, play hard type of person. And so, like I've never felt fully like a [university name omitted] student, I never felt like I fit that mold or description of what it is like to be a [university name omitted] student…

In being a commuter, Sonia was allowed some personal space between her scholarly life and her personal life. The physical distance of not living on campus and having a world outside of her department appears to have helped her to have a positive adjustment experience and finding balance. She mentions being a "work hard, play hard type of person" as an example of consciously working to maintain a balance in her own life and prioritizing social and personal obligations.

> I think my city friends have helped me make sure that I have fun. Like they've helped me maintain a social life, stay grounded, to have some normal activities, so they've helped me. In the Ph.D., you can be like, in blinders, like being totally in the library, working way too much. In that sense, they've been supportive in helping me stay balanced… They're all finished college… And funny enough, yes they're all women of color.

Sonia is aware that it would be very easy for her to approach the doctorate with "blinders" on, fully focusing all of her energy into studying. However, she is grateful to have a community of women of color outside of the academy that provide balance and emotional support for her.

Part of Sonia's deliberate boundaries between her personal life and her academic one was due to her experience as an undergraduate student as well as her Master's program. During her baccalaureate and Master's education, she was very involved in campus activities, including serving as a Resident Advisor in her college dorm. These experiences afforded her very little privacy in her personal life; she was literally working in the same location where she was living and felt there was very little space to lead a private life. Because of this, she very deliberately sought privacy and a work life balance during the Ph.D. Additionally, Sonia greatly benefitted

from the fact that some of her family lived fairly close to her doctoral campus, allowing her to

have a system of emotional support nearby.

> I was a Resident Advisor as an undergrad, and I was a Resident [Advisor] as a Master's
> student. So I feel like I've lived a good 3-4 years of my life living in a fishbowl. I felt
> my life was very public, that where I worked is where I lived. And it was getting to be
> too much.

> [School name omitted] is a small school. So I didn't want to be so immersed during the
> Ph.D., I didn't want to be overly tied like living next door to my classmates, and having
> lunch with them, it was just too much. I wanted privacy, I wanted distance. I had friends
> who live in [city name omitted]. My aunt and uncle live in [city name omitted], so that
> was another factor that I wanted to be closer to them.

A key in Sonia's success might have been her status as a commuter student, the fact that she had

friendships outside of the university, as well as the presence of family members that served as a

source of support close by. Additionally, she consciously chose to be a commuter, she

deliberately wanted some distance from her program because she didn't want to be completely

immersed in it. This is an illustration of Sonia's strategy about how she approached the

doctorate. The fact that she had gotten her Masters in the same institution as her Ph.D. benefitted

her, as she knew what to expect regarding the overall culture of the program and how to navigate

the system.

Having an external support system of family and friends outside of her graduate program

also proved to be a resource, especially because her colleagues were not as supportive and

collegial as she would have liked. Although her incoming class was rather large, it was divided

into various cohorts based on academic specialization. Thus, her particular cohort was quite

small, with 4 of them in total. The cohort is a "diverse bunch, with varied ages and realities,

some married with children, with realities very different than mine." Sonia was single, did not

have children, and was younger than her peers, so she felt she had little in common with them.

Additionally, they were not very open to collaboration and providing each other with support.

178

For example, when preparing for their comprehensive exams, she suggested they work together

to ensure mutual success. However, her colleagues rebuffed her invitations, preferring to work

alone. She describes her disappointing experience with her exams:

> Interestingly, at the end of our first year we had to take a huge general comprehensive
> exam which spanned like centuries of [discipline omitted] material, we had to take 2
> classes like part 1, part 2. I had suggested to the group, "Hey, do you want guys want to
> study together?" Let's make some practice questions, gather our notes, work together.
> And they said NO. They said "We're not interested, we already took the classes, we
> already have our lecture notes, we already have what we need, you know we already have
> our homework, it's fine, we don't need to study together." I was like "wow"…

Despite Sonia's attempts to form study groups with her cohort members to prepare for

programmatic requirements like qualifying exams, her colleagues were not interested in

collaborating and working together. She was incredulous and disappointed in their response, as

she understood the value of collaboration in graduate studies and the need for academic support

among peers. While their disinterest in combining resources may have been motivated by

multiple factors, she felt this was problematic for multiple reasons.

> I don't know. I don't know if it was a competitive issue or if they just truly felt like it
> was a waste of time for them. Perhaps that it wouldn't benefit them to work with me.
> But, yes, they were not interested, and I found that really shocking. I was like "Don't
> you guys want to work together? We are all in a cohort together; we are in the same
> program." And they were just not interested, so [shrugs]. That was very eye-opening for
> me. That was like a taste of academia.

> While Sonia was disenchanted with her colleagues' attitudes, she did not allow that to

discourage her, and she was quite resourceful in finding other peers whom she could rely on and

work with in order to obtain the support needed to navigate the doctorate. Sonia was able to find

academic community with other students within her program that were not in her direct cohort.

The changing demographics of her academic department and increasing racial diversity of her

program helped facilitate this. The increased diversity allowed students such as Sonia to form a

community of scholars with similar interests and racial identities. She describes this dynamic:

179

> For the first time, we actually have a decent size of Latino/Latina students in our Ph.D. program. There's about 12 of us from first year to finishing the Ph.D. We've actually been trying to meet at least once a month, doctoral Latina/o students to support each other.

For Latina/o students in her graduate program, this group has functioned as a source of strength and guidance in multiple forms, not just academically but also emotionally and culturally. However, the creation of this space has been met with challenges.

> It's interesting, I've definitely gotten pushback from people about exactly what it is. "Is this a social hour, is this a working group? Like what are we doing? Is this a waste of time, what is the purpose?" It's like, it can be whatever you want it to be.

> People had voiced a desire to have a space, it's the first time that we've had so many Latina/Latino students. I practiced my [conference] paper during one of our lunch sessions, and I got good feedback. Another time we went to the Mexican restaurant around the corner and we had margaritas, because we needed time to socialize.

Although the group has functioned on variety of ways to assist Latina/o students in the doctoral socialization process, there is still a bit of anxiety about the group identity and how the group should function. Tied to this anxiety is a real fear of being pigeonholed as the Latina/os in the program, and a fear of what this labeling could mean within a historically Anglo institution where racial minorities are still largely underrepresented and marginalized. Within the academy, scholarship that is tied to racial politics is still often seen as illegitimate, as not truly real work, and graduate students can sense this. Thus, even being part of a student group geared towards offering support to Latina/o students can evoke nervous feelings for Latina/o students. There is a fear that forming groups such as this one may draw attention to them and as a result experience negative consequences.

> It's kind of interesting to see how different people react. I think there is also a fear of being stereotyped. A lot of Ph.D. students who are Latina/o don't want to let on, they purposefully don't cover Latina/o topics because they don't want to be pigeonholed or stereotyped, which I understand, because the academy can be that way. This sense to be ghettoized, it's not real or academic work, it's a subset, like a special interest group or something.

Racial dynamics within the academy is something Sonia has had to strategically negotiate. For example, her doctoral qualifying exams were not only difficult due to lack of collegial collaboration, but the process also revealed some racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) from faculty in her department. She recounts her experience below:

> Another thing that was, you know, bordering on a little racist was when we were trying to schedule the exam, a professor asked me, "Sonia, you need the 6 hours right, you need the English Second Language, you need the extra time right, the 6 hours?" I was like, "No, I'm good with the standard 4 hours that everyone gets, I don't need the standard additional 2 hours."

Although Sonia is fully fluent in English, by virtue of being Latina it was assumed by a faculty member that she would need testing accommodations. Sonia is certain this interaction occurred as a result of her racial identity. "Being Latina, I'm sure of it! It was because I talked about Spanish [academic area omitted] in class. So he assumed that I needed extra time. So I found that very interesting." Although the faculty member may have intended to be helpful or supportive in offering additional resources, it was based on incorrect and poor assumptions about Sonia's language aptitude based on her racial identity.

Overall, while her department is not a space she would describe as racially "hostile," Sonia does recall multiple racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) she has experienced during her graduate studies.

> Our faculty is not as diverse as it could be, but they're fairly attuned to culture and diversity. So it's not a foreign concept. I feel like it's little microaggressions. Almost just under the radar, slightly racist comments and reactions. Not blatant, but it's there. Sort of under the surface.

The geographical locations of Sonia's university campus is in a racially diverse area, and thus there is also a great deal of diversity on campus. However, the makeup of the departmental faculty is still not very racially diverse, and as described by Sonia, microaggressions (Pierce,

1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) do occur, even if they're "under the surface."

Despite some uncomfortable racial dynamics, Sonia has found allies not only with other Latina/o students in her program, but also with a Latino faculty member in her department. She has been fortunate to receive great mentorship and guidance with this professor. He has become much more than a mentor to her, but a true source of support.

> He has become like an uncle to me. He's so supportive, he's so sweet. He's really seen me grow, he's really walked with me through the journey, because he was with me when I was a Master's student, and now as a Ph.D. student. He's wonderful; he's been an incredible supportive person.

Additionally, the use of social media has allowed Sonia to forge connections and maintain relationships with other scholars with similar interests across the country.

> Through the beauty of technology… Facebook, Facebook has been a godsend. Because I can keep in touch with friends who go to [other university names omitted]. In a way that I have felt supported is people I have met through [name of organization omitted], but during the academic year we're off doing our own schoolwork in academic places.

Social media has also enabled her to build relationships with individuals she has met through her professionalization organization, and to find academic community not only within her program, but also nationally.

Although Sonia has enjoyed success during her graduate studies, her doctoral journey has not been without its challenges. One place where Sonia has faced difficulties has been with self-doubt. Not unlike many Latina academics from working class backgrounds, Sonia has struggled with impostor syndrome (Clance, Imes, 1978) during her graduate studies. She has struggled with not feeling she belongs in her program, that she is not worthy of her academic success and that she does not have as much to offer academically as her peers. Fortunately, Sonia has had the

182

encouragement and support of her mentors to battle and counteract these feelings. She discusses her ongoing battle with self-doubt:

> Probably my own self-doubt. My committee and my advisor have been really challenging me on this. They're like "You doubt yourself so much. Like you need to own it, you need to stop doubting yourself so much and just say what you need to say."
>
> Because I always hesitate, I always hesitate to make a claim. "You need to come out there really bold." And they can tell in my writing. They're like, "You're being a little wishy washy and not really nailing it. We want you to nail it, just say it, you know." So it's hard. I think it's my own self-doubt is something that I've struggled with far before the Ph.D. It's something I always struggled with, unfortunately, this idea of confidence, self-doubt, of not doubting yourself.

For Sonia, the fear that her voice is not valid or valuable is sometimes reflected in her writing, it sometimes manifests itself in a timid writing voice. But, she is fortunate to have mentors who are able to identify this, and are able to encourage her to work past this and assert the power of her voice. It is valuable that the mentorship she received included validating her voice and pushing her to move beyond self-doubt.

In addition to struggling with impostor syndrome (Clance, Imes, 1978), Sonia has also dealt with the challenges that come with the dissonance of multiple worlds and the difficulty of straddling multiple realities as a Latina from a working class background, and as a first generation college and graduate student. Specifically, as Sonia has progressed in her educational journey, she has felt a widening gap in communicating and relating with her family. Just as she has sometimes felt she cannot find others within her educational community who identify with her culturally and with her socio-economic background, she sometimes feels a dissonance with her family in what she is experiencing with her education. Sonia struggles with a multitude of conflicting feelings around her family and her educational achievements. Her family sacrificed a great deal for her to be able to achieve her goals, and she is grateful to them, though sometimes other uncomfortable feelings emerge as well.

With family I found it challenging. I found the education gap challenging, between myself and my parents. My parents did not go to college. My dad, he sort of did like technical school a little bit in [country of origin omitted], but as soon as he came to the US, he started working, he was just working and working. And my mom, she just went to public high school in LA and started working.

It's very much like the immediate needs. Like we have the bills to pay right now, we have to pay the rent, you know, gas, electricity. So the long term, like getting education, was put on the backburner, and it just never happened for them. But they always pushed my brother and I to get an education, like that was never a question. They were like "You have to go to school." And now, it kind of makes me feel bad, because they'll say things like, "We know we're not as smart as you, we know we're not educated, we're dumb." And I'm like "no one is saying that."

Sonia feels her family has been her biggest cheerleaders and source of support in her academic journey, but it seems the more she more success she enjoys scholarly success, the more difficulty she has in feeling connected to her family. She fears becoming an "elitist academic," becoming out of touch from reality, and forgetting her roots and where she came from:

I'm feeling the clash, the distance, between my own family and myself, which bothers me, because I don't want to become an elitist academic. And yet, I've worked really hard. I've worked so hard to get here, so much schooling, my entire life. And yeah, so the self-doubt and that challenge have changed how I relate to my family a little bit. Or challenged the relationship with my family, those are big things.

Sonia wants to share with her family what she is doing and what she is achieving in her doctoral pursuits. However, she sometimes has difficulty bridging that gap, and thus employs various strategies to deal with this challenge.

Yeah, I have to really simplify. I have to be very general, and really simplify in explaining what I'm working on, in explaining my classes, because I know they won't understand, and I don't want them to feel worse, I don't want them to feel bad. Like conversations, unfortunately, I feel like our conversations are very surface, because they can't go to that deeper theoretical analytical like level. That's just not part of their vocabulary. So it's hard, it's kind of hard sometimes.

From Sonia's description, she does not seem to be completely satisfied with the strategies she is employing, as she still feels she is not able to connect with her family as deeply as she would like. What is ironic is that although she feels she doesn't fully belong with her family due to her

educational success, she also feels like an outsider at times within the academy. Sonia describes this feeling of being an outsider as feeling like she is "playing dress-up":

> I think, something I've been trying to reflect on, is myself, almost like an interloper. I get to play dress-up. Like playing dress-up. My parents sacrificed a lot so I could go to private school. Yeah, from elementary school to 6th grade, it was a private secular school. And then, from middle school high school. They've sacrificed a lot. And they've told me, "We wanted to give you a better life. We wanted to give you a chance to have something more than we had. We want you to do more than we ever did."

Moving in spaces where she and her family didn't come from, and where was often the only one or one of few Latinas from a working class background has at times made her feel like she is putting on a performance, like she is having to wear a costume or disguise.

In addition to finding it difficult to relate with her family, Sonia has also faced obstacles in the dating arena, particularly finding partners who can both identify with her culturally as well as academically. Sonia would like to find a mate who understands her struggles as a Latina within higher education, as well as be able to communicate with her regarding her scholarly work. She is also seeking a partner who will be supportive of her dream, who will not create greater obstacles for her educational journey, and who will not expect her to fall into various gender stereotypes. Finding these qualities in a partner has proven to be a challenge:

> For me, my education is a huge part of my life, and I think being an educated woman will make me a better mother down the line. And I've also witnessed a lot of women who sacrifice their dreams for their partners, for men in particular… I rarely see men so supportive of what the women's goals are. It happens, but it doesn't seem like the norm. I was always hyper conscious of that.

Sonia is very intentional and self-aware in how her education has transformed her, how her educational success has strengthened her as a person and as a woman. She knows what she would like in a partner, including someone who is supportive of her career goals. However, finding a partner who not only supports her, but is also respectful of her achievements and is not intimidated by her success has been difficult. In her dating experience, she has found that men

have been intimidated by her success. Like many women, Sonia does think about her age and her desire to have a family and bear children, but she is not willing to forego her scholarly success to achieve this. She describes this struggle:

> I'm turning 32 in April. As I get ready to turn 32, finding a partner who is not intimidated by a woman who is getting a Ph.D. is very difficult. They say, at first, "Oh cool, that's good," but then it like hits them, or they feel embarrassed that they haven't done as much school, or the conversations just remain at a very basic level, they're not excited to talk about academic stuff. So it doesn't work out, it just doesn't work.
>
> So I've found that aspect to be very difficult. Because I want to find someone who understands me, and can have the type of conversations that I want to have. Someone who's excited to go to a museum exhibit, someone who likes to travel, has shared interest in things, and it's been really really difficult.

Due to her trouble in finding a suitable mate, Sonia is currently focusing on her academics and completing her doctorate.   However, it sometimes feels bittersweet; while some things in her life are going well, she does feel her romantic life is "on hold":

> On one hand I feel like the current stuff is going good, I'm doing well in school. On the other hand, this other area is not really moving, this other area is just kind of like, kind of on the backburner, kind of like on hold.

Additionally, Sonia has experienced some trials when she has had serious romantic relationships while pursuing graduate studies. She has been in two long-term, emotionally serious relationships, but they did not work out due to various challenges. One of the relationships failed due largely to Sonia's desire to pursue her Ph.D. and a lack of understanding from her partner regarding her academic pursuits.

> So, I've had 2 serious relationships. One of them is a person I met while in [the country where I pursued my Master's degree]… we dated for a few months. I stayed there an extra 4 or 5 months, not to be with him, I stayed because I loved [the country where I pursued my Master's degree], and I was teaching English for a little bit. But ultimately, it was you know, I need to do my Ph.D., I need to go home.
>
> It was funny, he couldn't understand why I wanted to come back and pursue a Ph.D. He didn't understand. He's like, "But you went to college, but you have a Masters, you're 28, aren't you ready to settle down and get married?" I was like, "No, I need to go back

and do this." We got in touch a little bit after I went back to the U.S., but sure enough, it ended.

Although Sonia stayed in another country an extended amount of time allowing her to spend time with her partner, he was unable to compromise with her around her career goals. For him, her academic achievements were more than enough, and her age was an indication that she should begin seriously considering getting married and starting a family. Sonia was steadfast in not compromising her professional dreams for this relationship, and thus, "sure enough, it ended."

Despite her desire to have a more fulfilling romantic life, Sonia is clear about why she is pursuing her doctorate, and how the sacrifices she is making are worth it for her. Despite social pressures as a young woman to settle down and get married by a certain age, she does not hold regrets about following her dreams.

> I that I'm following my heart, and I think that I am pursuing my dream, and in that way, I don't think I'll ever have regrets. There is no one pulling me away.

> Well, I mean, I just haven't met anyone worth the time, I haven't met anyone like quick-witted or who is that interesting. So, I'm going to keep on my path, I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing. But, I definitely get questioned. "Like have you met anyone?" So, it's interesting.

Sonia has been fortunate in finding emotional support around her frustrations with her romantic life from her mother. Additionally, her religious faith has helped her to cope with the situation. She applies this same faith that things will work out well to her personal life.

> Like my mom is always like "Sonia, it'll happen, it'll happen when it's supposed to happen, relax." I should trust her and also, in terms of faith, to have trust, to have trust in God, that everything will work out, all of these wonderful things have fallen into place, wonderfully, perfectly, so it's like, why wouldn't that? In due time." But I have to be honest, I'm a pretty impatient person, you know, so I'm like, "Hello, c'mon!"

Instead of pressuring her to find someone to start a family with, her mother has been a voice of encouragement.

On Not Being Cooled Out

Sonia's experiences within the doctorate have informed her post-doctoral career

aspirations in multiple ways. Her graduate education has allowed her to learn about the kind of

academic institution she would like to be a part of as a faculty member and the student

populations she would like to teach. When asked what type of institution she would like to work

in, Sonia responds:

> I think a school with a nice diverse student body. Part of why I'm doing [discipline
> omitted] is to support the Latina/o community. I would like to be like an advocate and
> mentor to Latina/o undergrads, and graduate students if the institution has a graduate
> program. A major city. I'm an urban kind of girl, living in an urban setting. I'm pretty
> open because I know how difficult the job market is. A diverse environment, with a
> diverse student body.

For Sonia, it is important that she work within a diverse environment and that she be able to

support Latina/o students in her work. During her doctoral studies, she had an opportunity to

teach, and she found it very rewarding. Sonia describes her positive experiences with teaching:

"I've been able to T.A. [serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant]. At the end of my first year, I

applied for a teaching fellowship…That was a great course, had a really good time, had really

great student conversations. So it was an excellent teaching experience."

Her desire to work closely with students and have an opportunity to mentor them also influences

the type of academic institution where she would like pursue her career.

> It's one of those tricky things. I'm interested in research, but teaching is also really
> important to me. I feel like institutions lean one way or another, they put the emphasis on
> one or the other. If I had to choose between research and teaching, I would choose
> teaching. I think it's crucial for me to inspire the next generation, no matter what your
> field is, no matter what you want to do in life, to serve others, to create change in the
> world. That's really important to me, so working one on one with students would be
> great.

Teaching underrepresented/Latina/o students is a major goal for her and a major motivator in

pursuing a job in the academy. Based on her doctoral experience within a Research Intensive

Institution, Sonia has seen how research is emphasized and valued within these institutions. Sonia feels she must choose between conducting research and teaching, and this understanding makes her more likely to pursue an academic career outside of Research Intensive Institutions, where she may more successfully pursue her interests of teaching and student mentorship. Thus, while she has enjoyed a positive experience during the doctorate and has received effective and supportive mentorship in her doctoral socialization, the possibility of her pursuing the professorate within a Research Intensive Institution is not certain. Sonia's situation raises the question, in the pipeline from the Ph.D. to the professorate, how much do other factors beyond mentorship and socialization impact post-doctoral career goals?

Daniela

Just as Daniela approached the graduate application process with a straightforward and pragmatic attitude, she tackled her doctoral studies in a similar fashion. The transition from her Master's program to the doctorate was fairly seamless due to her familiarity with the program; having obtained her Master's degree in the same institution as she was pursing her Ph.D. allowed her to have a certain level of comfort and ease in her doctoral career. Additionally, many of her colleagues who had been in the M.A. program also transitioned into the doctorate, so she was able to enjoy a certain level of comfort in already knowing and having a sense of familiarity with the majority of her peers. Perhaps the largest adjustment she encountered in her Ph.D. was the increased level of rigor in academics and the raised expectations in her scholarly endeavors. Additionally, moving into the doctorate raised the level of commitment to their future careers.

> A lot of my peers had transitioned from the M.A. [Master of Arts] program. We got some students who came from different programs, but not a whole lot.
>
> It was definitely a step up, it was like "Ok, you're in a Ph.D. program now." Not that the Master's wasn't a lot of work, but it was like, this is a real thing. The Master's was challenging, but I think all of us in the Ph.D. program were like, "Ok, we're going to be professors." So, it was serious business [laughs].

As Daniela describes, being in a doctorate program denoted a certain level of dedication to academia, the stakes had been raised and she and her colleagues certainly felt the pressure.

Daniela not only benefitted from knowing the majority of her colleagues previously, she had a positive working relationship with them. The academic climate of her department was somewhat positive and supportive, thus facilitating a generally successful and empowering doctoral socialization experience for Daniela. To a certain extent, she knew she had been fortunate to be in a Ph.D. program that was cooperative and supportive in nature, as she also

knew of the possibilities of hostile academic climates due to her friends' experiences. She describes the climate of her doctoral department:

> Yeah, it was very supportive. I've always heard that some departments are very competitive or back stabbing or what have you. But it wasn't like that. Maybe it was because I was in the [name of discipline omitted] department so a lot of people were familiar with Latina/o culture and that just lent itself to a sense of community. But yeah, it wasn't backstabbing, I didn't have any problems.

Daniela is perhaps a positive example of how a supportive and empowering Ph.D. graduate experience can really impact optimism in thinking about her future in the academy. Because she benefitted from a collegial environment, her experience was much more rewarding overall. She didn't have to deal with distractions of competitive or "backstabbing" peers. Additionally, she felt comfortable in her department due to the acceptance of her culture by her colleagues, something she partly attributes to the fact that most people in the department were familiar with Latina/o culture.

The Mentorship Experience

When asked about obtaining support and guidance from faculty mentors, Daniela cites "word of mouth" as a primary tool in finding the support she needed. This is a frequent strategy employed by doctoral students in seeking and obtaining mentorship: relying on the reputation of faculty by students, considering the unofficial evaluations graduate students conduct of faculty and sharing that information with each other as forms of support within the academy. By relying on the reputation of faculty and "word of mouth," graduate students garner information to make more informed choices regarding the specific professors they choose to seek out for mentorship. For example, when asked about what strategies Daniela employed to form her doctoral committee, "word of mouth" was a key strategy:

That was kind of word of mouth as well. You choose professors that you work with, that you know are good, that have common research areas. And just the standard stuff. You think about style.

This one Chicana mentor, I had asked her to be on my committee, and I was talking to another committee member, and she said, "Oh, why don't you ask her to be your Chair [of your doctoral committee]?" And I was like, "No!" Because she was not organized. She, I guess, knew the subject matter, but she was not organized at all. I'm an organized person, and obviously, you need to be organized if you're chairing a doctoral thesis. And I thought, "I do not want to work with this person as a Chair, because she's just not with it."

Daniela was very self-aware around her needs and the type of support that would prove most effective for her in the doctorate, she was clear around the qualities she was seeking in a mentor and Committee Chair, and was clear that she needed someone that was organized. She relied on "word of mouth" to eliminate potential choices that may have possibly proven to be frustrating or even damaging to Daniela's educational trajectory, and was able to make strategic choices accordingly. She utilized this method on several occasions in selectively choosing her doctoral committee members.

Same thing with another committee member. I mean, he really knows his content area, but again, he's not organized. You know, you hear from other people who gets your drafts back on time, so I did not want to work with those professors even though they know their content area. It's not going to help you if they're not reading your draft and delaying your graduation, they're not giving you feedback so you can move on to the next chapter.

Daniela was savvy enough to understand the level of power and influence a faculty mentor can hold over the doctoral experience for graduate students. Being saddled with a disorganized mentor can significantly stall the doctoral process. She understood that even if she was productive in her scholarship, with the wrong support system, she could find herself at the mercy of a faculty mentor's less than expedient timeline.

Daniela's foresight served her well in easily navigating the doctoral experience. Her wisdom also helped her navigate the tricky terrain of asserting her needs while maintaining

positive working relationships with faculty members that expressed interest in being on her committee, faculty members which she knew would not be a good fit for her needs. In particular, Daniela wanted to be very careful about choosing a Chair of her doctoral committee that would advance her needs and help her navigate the Ph.D.

> Fortunately, the people that I did ask are organized. They are strong committee members in their area. Yeah, I got lucky with the Chair. I was really scared about that. And fortunately, my Chair said, "Oh, I'll Chair for you." I don't know how I got out of the other person being my Chair, but somehow I was able to get out of it, and I was "Phew!" [laughs].

She found the Chair of her committee member based on this faculty member's reputation, and did a bit of "research" regarding this professor's working style prior to considering her as a mentor:

> I had already heard that she was a good committee member. So I had asked somebody that had just finished their Ph.D., "What was she like?" And she said, "She is like this. She has deadlines, benchmarks." And I said, "That's who I want, that's the person." Because that's how I work, so that's what kind of made me choose her, so I knew she would be very specific with deadlines.

Word of mouth functioned as a form of resistance for Daniela. Instead of passively accepting suggestions as to who should be in her committee, she was very active in making choices that best fit her working style and needs. In sharing information with other doctoral students, she and her peers became better armed to make the most empowering and positive choices in order to navigate the Ph.D. smoothly.

Daniela was also extremely proactive in creating opportunities for doctoral professionalization when these resources were lacking in her department. During her time in the doctoral program, she and her peers realized there was a great deal of information in the doctoral socialization process that was lacking. Thus, she and her colleagues took the initiative to create a forum where this information would be obtained and shared with the students in the program.

When asked how professionalization occurred in her department, Daniela described how an infrastructure of support was designed and created by her and her peers:

> That was us, that was the graduate student organization. Because we had all these questions, and we heard different parts of information. So in my second to last year [in the Ph.D.] we had a strong group of graduate students that formed this organization. We put together a lot of workshops on interview and MLA, general professionalization, the CV, publishing, all of this business that you need to know.
>
> And you know, professors, a lot of different professors get asked the same things. So it was helpful to them to have it centralized. "Ok, this professor is going to talk about publishing so I don't have to worry about it. So yeah, I'll talk to you about the CV, because they're going to talk to you about publishing." So, professionalization, I feel, was initiated by us, the graduate student organization, and then the faculty just fell in line. I think they were waiting and/or happy that somebody organized it. And if it was organized, they were happy to participate in it.

Professional development was a need students had; they had unanswered questions that needed to be addressed in order to navigate the doctorate successfully. What is notable about this example is the level of initiative the students took to have their needs met. They understood that structurally, there was a lack of support around some very basic doctoral socialization, and unless they personally did something about it, the institution might not meet their needs.

Fortunately, Daniela and her peers also had faculty members that were willing to be supportive in creating these resources. The solution they came up with of setting up forums on various topics does rely on the existence of supportive faculty willing to donate their time and resources to invest in student success. This model may not always function, as it is dependent on the culture of the department and the willingness of faculty to offer their time. Additionally, it relies on students knowing which questions to ask, knowing what skills they should be obtaining as part of their doctoral indoctrination into the academy. In essence, it requires that students be somewhat savvy in understanding that there are unwritten rules they need to learn in order to thrive within academia. This understanding is not always obvious. For students who don't necessarily understand the nature of academia and fully understand the need for guidance and

194

mentorship as intrinsic to succeeding in the doctorate, the creation of these spaces may not be an option. Additionally, not all students may feel as empowered in their department, they may not feel they have the influence or power within their program, and may not feel as comfortable or even have the institutional support to be able to create resources for doctoral socialization.

Although Daniela did obtain a certain level of guidance due to her initiative, there were gaps in information she feels she missed which may have impacted her doctoral trajectory. One area where this was prevalent is the area of academic publishing. When asked if there was anything she wished she had known during the Ph.D., she responded:

> Maybe just the publishing aspects. Like I would have been a little more cognizant when I was writing papers, like I would have thought, "How can I turn this into an article, or which journal can I submit this to?" I think I would have liked to have known more about journals, or read more journals, so that I would be better prepared now. Not that I feel underprepared, just that I would have had a little more knowledge.

In not having a clear understanding of how to write publishable papers or the importance of writing course papers with publishing as an ultimate goal, Daniela possibly missed opportunities to further her academic career by obtaining academic publications.

Initiative is a word Daniela often utilized to describe how she navigated the doctoral experience and the experience of mentorship. When asked to summarize her mentorship experience, Daniela responded:

> Ummm, it was a positive experience, but you had to have initiative. I think. And I don't know if that's typical of our work, or just college in general. You're your own agent, you have to advocate for yourself and ask questions. So I'm not sure how to categorize that. I had to have the initiative, but every time I asked, people would help me.

Daniela's resourcefulness served her well during the doctorate, and it is perhaps this very characteristic which allowed her to create and access the network of support she needed to ensure her successful completion of the doctorate, and her eventual attainment of a tenure-track faculty position at the university of her choice. Additionally, her training and socialization

195

provided her with a sufficient understanding of the academy, which subsequently allowed her to

formulate and pursue future career goals. For example, when asked if she felt prepared for the

professorate during the Ph.D., Daniela felt she had access to some information, or at least enough

to make a somewhat informed decision when pursuing the professorate:

> Yes and no. Yes, in that it matched what my expectations were and what I had always heard. And no, in that there was nothing in the Ph.D. that made me say, "Oh, I'm going to change course and I don't like this, or what have you."

> So I always knew and I'd heard that Research 1 is a lot of pressure and this and that, and so I said "That's not for me, that's not what I want." But I had always heard that teaching college, depending on where you go, is a little bit more relaxed, and that it's not high stress in publishing. And I said, "That's for me." I don't mind publishing, but I don't want to live and die by the pen. So, that was my experience in the Ph.D. program, and thus far, that's been my experience outside [in the professorate].

> Additionally, Daniela was able to make informed decisions about the type of institution

she would like to pursue the doctorate in based on her goals for her personal life in the future.

During the Ph.D., she felt she made sacrifices in her romantic life in order to succeed

academically. Therefore, when thinking about her future scholarly career, she was clear that she

was not willing to make the same level of sacrifice. For Daniela, it was clear she wanted more of

a "work/life" in her future.

> Personal life. The whole personal work/life balance. I feel like work was a high priority, and personal life was lower. I mean, I still had some friends, and socialized within our Ph.D. program. We would get together at people's houses and what not, and I had a partner in the last 3 years of my program. So, I did have some balance. I don't know, maybe it was a normal balance, and I just wanted more.

Additionally, speaking with colleagues in the professorate regarding their own experiences in

their careers allowed Daniela to get a clearer sense of what life as a faculty member in Research

Intensive Institutions entailed. It allowed her to see what type of life she wanted, and what sort

of professional expectations would not suit her needs.

196

Yes, that was a big deal for me. That's another reason why I wanted kind of like a Teaching College is that I wanted to have a life. I wanted to have work/life balance. That was something that was very important to me.

I have friends who are at Research 1 schools and they have a partner or they have a partner and a family, and you know, they still manage. But one of my friends at an R1, I was talking about stress, and she was like, "Oh take Xanax, the assistant professor's best friend at an R1 institution." And I was like, "Oh my God! I don't want that to be me. I don't want to be drugged."

I mean, whatever, everyone has coping skills. Maybe mine is like pizza, I don't know. But, there's just more pressure. And I feel like I gave up a lot in the Ph.D. I want to say I didn't see my family as often, but that was a matter of just economics. I think for my personal life too. I was just busy, I felt like I couldn't have as much fun, if you will, because I had to get it done. So now I can relax a little bit more. Work life balance was very important to me.

From speaking with their friends about their own stressful experiences as faculty in Research Intensive Institutions, she knew that the level of pressure they were experiencing and the potential effects of this pressure were not appealing to her. For Daniela, maintaining balance and her mental health were important. Even during the doctorate, she sought out resources to ensure she was well not just physically, but mentally. She felt she was in a high stakes environment where it was easy to become overwhelmed with the demands of a graduate education, and she wanted to ensure she was well equipped to manage these.

So my support system was in the department, and outside. Just whatever there was on campus, and it caters to students, so there were resources for me. Psych services, that was a big support [laughs]. Yeah, you would go to counseling and psychological services. Being able to go and talk to a counselor for free just about being a graduate student. And they specialize in this business, so they know the stresses.

It is perhaps Daniela's resourcefulness that allowed her to enjoy great success in the doctorate and pursue her future scholarly career with both pragmatism and optimism. Because the doctorate had not been a traumatizing or isolating experience for Daniela, she was able to consider pursuing a career in the academy without fear or dread of what the future would hold. Additionally, due to the level of professionalization she received, she was able to approach her professional future in the professorate with a toolset of knowledge.

197

On Not Being Cooled Out

When transitioning from the doctorate to the professorate, Daniela had some awareness

regarding some of the challenges she might face. Once again, the professionalization resource

she had co-created in her department paid off in increasing her knowledge regarding what to

expect in making the move from doctoral student to professor.

> I remember in some workshop that we organized, one of the professors said that it's
> sometimes difficult to transition from being a graduate student to being a professor.
> Because as a graduate student, you have a ton of support resources, you have student
> centers, you have graduate clubs, you have your cohort. When you're a professor, it's
> just you. There might be a union, you might have events. But it's very individual work,
> versus when you're a graduate student, there's just, all of your professors are there to
> support you, that's the whole point.

What is interesting about Daniela's comment here is the fact that she mentioned on multiple

occasions how she and her peers had to take initiative to create sources of support since they

were not readily available. In some ways, even though "the whole point" is that "professors are

there to support you," in Daniela's case, just as in the experience of many doctoral students,

professors were there to support her mainly when she advocated for herself and ensured that they

supported her in the ways she needed.

As Daniela neared the end of her doctorate, she began applying to academic positions.

This process evoked a multitude of emotions for her. She describes how she approached the

process and the various coping mechanisms she employed. One strategy she utilized to manage

the level of stress, anxiety and pressure she felt was to only apply to a few positions.

> Well that's almost embarrassing [laughs]. Because I feel like I should have applied to
> more schools than I applied to. So that process, so our job list comes out in the Fall, so
> you start applying in the Fall for next year. But I was still working on a chapter. It's
> hard to write your dissertation and be on the market at the same time, because they're
> both full time jobs.

> And I think I was little bit scared, and I might have used one of the chapters as a crutch,
> like "I have to finish this, I have to make these revisions, it has to be perfect before I
> submit it to my committee, so therefore I don't have that much time to apply for jobs."

And I think I felt like I wasn't good enough or a strong enough candidate, so "why am I going to apply to all of these schools?" because you know, you have to have gone to Stanford or something. If people at Stanford can't get jobs, how am I going to get a job and this and that.

So I applied to, I feel like I didn't apply to as many schools as my peers did. And I feel like I was partly lucky because my partner was also looking at job lists. So I didn't apply to as many schools as I probably should have. But I got lucky and I got a job anyway.

Daniela describes many of the issues and emotions doctoral students face when applying to the professorate. She describes the self-doubt many women of color feel in academia, the feeling that they are not good enough, qualified enough, or worthy enough to be accepted in certain academic institutions. Additionally, she describes the struggle of time-management many Ph.D. students face when on the academic job market while still completing their dissertations. Both endeavors are time and energy consuming, both can be "full-time jobs," and it can be difficult for doctoral students to manage both. Finally, Daniela also acknowledges the challenge of a competitive academic job market.

However, despite these barriers, Daniela was successful in her application process partly due having received guidance regarding how to embark on the daunting endeavor. The application process for tenure-track faculty positions is quite detailed and requires a certain level of knowledge and skill regarding how to navigate it. Just like navigating the doctorate is full of unwritten rules which are necessary to follow in order to achieve success, without knowledge of certain practices such as "job talks," knowing how to write an effective cover letter, and formulating a good curriculum vitae, scholars may be unsuccessful in their attempts to enter the professorate in a saturated employment market. When asked how she knew how to approach the process of applying to tenure-track positions, Daniela responded:

I think from my advisor and from my workshops I felt pretty much informed. And the process seemed pretty standard. Your teaching philosophy, your CV, your writing sample, your letters of recommendation, blah blah. So it wasn't that difficult. It was just a matter of doing it, and not being afraid to apply to places.

199

> Yeah, I think it was through the workshops and talking to people, and talking to your professors. You just need a set of 5 documents or whatever, and you send it in. It's not easy to craft your teaching philosophy, etc, but it's writing, we all have to do it, so...

The way she describes approaching this process is interesting, in that she describes it as "pretty standard," not "that difficult," and yet "not easy." There is a certain level of skill required to write an effective curriculum vita, to be able to craft a good teaching philosophy, to build relationships with mentors that will write strong letters of recommendation, none of these tasks are easy, and learning to craft these to be competitive within a difficult academic job market requires mentorship as well. The art of successfully applying to the professorate is such an acquired skill that there is an emerging market of consultants who specialize in the academic job market.[26] These skills are valuable and these services are extremely useful; they provide the professionalization that doctoral students need to ensure long term success in the academy. However, the creation of these services is an excellent indicator of the lack of mentorship and guidance many students are experiencing during the doctorate. The unwritten rules of moving into the professorate should be communicated by faculty mentors during the doctoral socialization process, but that is not always the case, creating a need for consulting services to fill that need.

Daniela's transition into the professorate was supported by perhaps a combination of knowledge, professionalization, and good fortune. Another aspect of her move into a faculty position was navigating experiences like negotiating a salary, and how to do so in a manner that was appropriate and effective. Daniela admits that her lack of knowledge or naiveté in regards to

---

[26] These services guide doctoral students in everything from writing the CV, to preparing the job talk, to how to dress for on-campus interviews and visits, to how to conduct oneself during on-campus dinners with selection committees. One well known example is "The Professor Is In," a service consisting of individual coaching, document editing, and advice blogs on how to approach the academic job market in order to obtain faculty positions in the academy.

this allowed her to be fearless in approaching salary negotiation when offered her first academic position.

> Yeah, I might be the anomaly on that [negotiating salary]. I didn't have a problem with that. And I was almost a bit naïve. I didn't have a problem negotiating, that wasn't hard for me. I almost never thought twice about negotiating. I did a lot of research and talked to a lot of people. I had read that women don't like to negotiate, particularly women of color. Or women will often just take the first figure offered to them. And not just women, but graduate students in general. Because we want a job. So I'd done a lot of reading and research, and was like, "Why wouldn't I negotiate?"

> A man automatically negotiates, so why wouldn't I? There's no difference except for gender, and there really shouldn't be. So I tried to negotiate, but what I didn't realize was that the salary was already set because my institution, our faculty is unionized. So you can negotiate for how much experience the dean will give you, and then that determines your salary… and so I tried. And I still kind of got what I want. I got a laptop, professional development funds, so I was happy…

Although "naïve" about the dynamics of negotiation, she had information on how to negotiate her hiring package by talking to others and conducting research on the process. She read up on what challenges women of color face in this process, and the reasons they often settle for the first salary offered to them. Understanding the reasons why these dynamics occur and how they are tied to gender and racial inequalities bolstered her confidence in asking for greater pay. Although her potential employer could not offer a greater salary, she was able to negotiate for certain employment benefits. Most importantly, she felt satisfied and comfortable with the process and the fact that she advocated for herself.

Transitioning into the professorate itself has been fairly seamless for Daniela, with a few minor challenges. Due to her success in the doctorate and her ability in creating resources for herself when not readily available, she had the ability and foresight to do so as well in her entry into the professorate. She understood that as a woman of color in the academy, she might face certain obstacles, and she prepared accordingly. When asked if being a woman of color in a faculty position had been difficult, she responded:

201

> Not really, because I knew to look out for myself. And I knew to seek out support systems, and I knew there were going to be challenges. So within the academy, I don't feel like there were too many challenges or surprises. Outside, that's a different story.

Daniela knew to "look out for herself." This phrasing is powerful and reveals a great deal.

"Looking out for herself" indicates a need to take care of her own needs professionally, because

there was no guarantee she would have a mentor to support her and guide her in the transition.

Due to her training and experiences within the doctorate, Daniela was empowered to advocate

for herself, seek support when needed, and be creative in finding the resources she needed to

navigate academia. Additionally, Daniela's self-awareness and fearlessness in asking for what

she needs has served her well in her scholarly career.

Ingrid

Ingrid's doctoral journey was a rather successful one due to multiple factors, including

benefitting from the support of her colleagues. She describes her cohort as "extraordinary" and

discusses the uniquely outstanding qualities of her incoming doctoral class.

> So when I came in, I was in a cohort of eleven women. All women. There were a couple
> of extraordinary things about my cohort. What the faculty said was that when they went
> through the applications, it was just no contest. All the women who applied blew the
> other candidates out of the water, it just happened that way. And second, the cohort was
> twice as large as they usually admit. Usually, they admit six Ph.D. students a year. But
> we had three people who accepted without funding, and then we had another candidate
> who had been waitlisted a second year in a row, and was admitted. So we were
> extremely large, all women.

Ingrid's cohort was not only large in size, but also emotionally supportive during a challenging

time of transition in her first year of the Ph.D. She moved away from all of her family to pursue

her doctorate, and felt extremely homesick during that first year. Ingrid was grateful to have a

system of social support to help buffer this challenge.

> And moving away from [location omitted] where my entire family was, I was extremely
> homesick the first year. And my cohort was very close and spent a lot of time
> socializing, so I did have a built in social network and we were all going through the
> same thing at the same time. But it was a tough year, for sure.

Ingrid's first year was difficult not only due to the adjustment of living far away from her family,

but due to the increased level of rigor of her Ph.D. program in comparison to her Master's

education. She was surprised at the higher level of expectations of the doctorate. However, her

supportive colleagues also helped to mitigate some of these challenges.

> Even though there was only a year difference between the Masters and Ph.D., the level of
> work I had to produce was just so much more than I ever expected.

> Among the graduate students, for the most part it was a very supportive atmosphere. And
> the only competition there was, it was usually around funding. For the most part, the
> graduate students really supported each other and tried to help each other out as much as
> possible.

While there was a certain level of competition due to structural factors such as funding

inequalities, overall Ingrid could count on her peers to assist her in navigating her first year of

the Ph.D.

> I don't think I had any clue what I was getting myself into when I entered the doctoral process. Like I knew I had to do coursework, I knew there were exams, I knew there was a dissertation, but I don't think I quite understood what it was.

> And I guess it helped that the person I am closest to in my cohort, she had been there the previous year. And her partner was in the program, and he was a year ahead. So I was able to see what they were going through. I knew the path was, and I got to see other people ahead of me going through the process.

Ingrid was able to witness her friend's own doctoral journey, and learn from her experience

about what to expect in her own Ph.D. socialization process.

The Mentorship Experience

Ingrid's success in her doctorate has largely been influenced by having supportive faculty

mentors. Prior to entering the doctorate, she did face some hiccups in being assigned a faculty

advisor, but she did not allow this to deter her from moving forward in entering her doctoral

program and gambled that she would eventually find a mentor that would fit her needs.

> Before I came, they emailed me and told me "One of the faculty you wanted to work with," who was a Latina, "she's leaving the university. Do you still want to accept your position?" And I thought, "Ok, well that sucks, but ok," and I still came.

It took a bit of trial and error for Ingrid to eventually find the mentorship she needed. Ingrid's

self-awareness around her needs in an advisor allowed her to make strategic choices.

> So I changed to a faculty member who is a big name in field omitted. And after taking a class with her the first semester, I figured out it wasn't a good fit. And it wasn't necessarily anything against her. It was just her style of feedback and the way I take feedback was just not going to work.

Ingrid knew herself well enough to understand the type of feedback she would find useful, and

the style of feedback that she would find ineffective. She was self-aware enough to see a

mismatch between her and her first doctoral mentor early on, and was able to make a change in

search of a more effective mentoring relationship. As chance would have it, Ingrid was assigned

a temporary advisor who turned out to be the perfect match for her Ph.D. socialization needs.

> And then I heard about another faculty member, it was a recommendation from another friend in the program. But I never met her because she was on sabbatical. And it turns out, she was assigned to be my temporary advisor because of my research interests. And it just turned out, we were a really good fit, and she became my permanent advisor. She's still my advisor today; and I thank God every moment I have her as my advisor. She really made a world of difference in my Ph.D. program.

Ingrid was truly fortunate in having been assigned a mentor who met her needs, and credits her

mentorship style for a great deal of her success in the doctorate. One contributing factor in this

successful mentor/mentee relationship was a mutually shared understanding of their culture.

Having a Latina faculty advisor made a significant difference for Ingrid in finding validation and

understanding in what it means to be a Latina navigating the academy.

> I'm going to be honest. One of the main things that really made a difference for me: she's the first Latina advisor I ever had. She's the first Latina faculty I've ever worked with. And even though she's Puerto Rican and I come from a Mexican background, there's that cultural bond there. That I can talk to her about things, I can talk to her about family, I can talk to her about cultural expectations, and she gets me. So there's definitely that level of comfort.

Having the ability to discuss not only scholarship, but also issues such as the cultural

expectations Ingrid faces as a Latina allows her to find emotional support as she navigates the

Ph.D. Beyond the cultural identification, this faculty member's advising style fit Ingrid's needs.

As several other participants have shared, having a faculty member that has offered

unconditional support and has allowed her to make mistakes has been integral in her doctoral

success.

> It's her advising style, she's really calm. And I've missed several deadlines along the way, particularly with my dissertation. And she never gets upset, she never yells at me, which I've heard of faculty members doing.

I've heard of other faculty members berating their advisees. But she's always been really accepting. And we've never talked about it, but it seems like her attitude was "The work needs to get done, but you have to do it." There's nothing she can do to control my work output.

Her response is always "Ok, where are you in the process? Are you stuck? How can I get you unstuck?" So she is accepting of where I am, and she listens to me. And she's so knowledgeable. I ask her a question, and she can answer my question without looking at notes or anything. She's full of resources and encouragement. But she really is letting me, and asking me, to become my own scholar.

Ingrid's description of her mentor is notable for various reasons. She appreciates this faculty member's calm style of guidance. She describes the type of mentorship which she knows would not be conducive to productivity, mentorship involving being berated or yelled at. Ingrid repeatedly describes the lack of judgment, the patience, and never-ending encouragement from her advisor which allow her to produce work in an environment that is supportive and almost nurturing. She also gives her the academic freedom to explore and grow as a scholar, to find her scholarly voice. The confidence her advisor has in her allows Ingrid to explore and develop her tools as an academic without pressure.

Ingrid's other faculty mentors have also been supportive in various ways. One mentor is excellent at offering detailed and constructive feedback on her scholarly work.

One of the other faculty members, she just recently retired. She's been around forever, she's very strongly opinionated. She's really strong in theory. And she's always just been so supportive. I'll ask feedback from her, and she'll give six pages of typed feedback from her. We have a very good working relationship.

Another doctoral committee member also serves the function of offering emotional support in the form of encouragement.

I have one faculty member. I don't have a lot of meeting time with him, because he's super busy. So I haven't had a ton of chances to work with him. But every time I do work with him, he's been super enthusiastic, he's been really supportive, and he's provided resources, so he's been great.

Thus, while he is not as available to her due to scheduling constrictions, he does offer her a service she benefits from in his enthusiastic reassurance of her progress.

Ingrid describes her final doctoral committee member as "fantastic" and "phenomenal."

> The other committee member is actually member is actually fantastic. She's phenomenal. And I met her because I took extra classes to get a Women's Studies certificate. She's brilliant; she makes the most incredible connections across disciplines. She's so energetic, she's so enthusiastic. So she's been really supportive, and just another amazing scholar. She's really busy, so I don't get to spend as much time with her as I do my primary advisor.

> But she also has been great. She's really made me think about who I want to be as a scholar and professor, and she's really challenged me as well. She's really allowed me to look at things in new ways, so she's been great.

In addition to the emotional support this advisor offers in the form of enthusiasm, Ingrid discusses an essential form of professional development she is receiving from this mentor that is often overlooked. This professor is asking her to be conscientious of the type of scholar and professor she would like to be in the long term. She challenges her to think beyond her own field and expand her academic framework. Ingrid feels she will be a stronger scholar due to this intervention.

Ingrid's mentorship experience has been unique. She has been able to assemble a strong and supportive committee of faculty members who have served her mentoring needs in various ways. She has received both instrumental and emotional support from her doctoral committee members.

On Not Being Cooled Out

In many ways, Ingrid has had all of the structures of support and mentorship a doctoral student could have to ensure a successful Ph.D. journey. She has benefitted from a 1) a close cohort of colleagues that supported one another 2) close friendships with colleagues in "older" cohorts, which allowed her to benefit from their experience 3) a parent who is an academic and

has been an administrator, which allowed her access to "insider" knowledge about how the institute functions 4) faculty mentors who provided emotional support in the form of unconditional encouragement, and 5) faculty mentors who were generous in giving her feedback and offering her resources to assist her in her doctoral education and socialization.

However, Ingrid's doctoral socialization process has not been met without a few difficulties. One area where she has struggled has been around facing racial microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009). She has faced racially challenging dynamics within her department that have both undermined her identity as a Latina, while also subjecting her to racially offensive stereotypes. Ingrid has often been compared to the other Latina graduate student in her cohort, and has been challenged around being "authentically" Latina. She describes this very uncomfortable dynamic:

> I learned last year that someone from my cohort compared me to the other Latina in my program, and said I was less of a Latina than she was, because I didn't speak Spanish. Why are we competing to see who is the real Latina?

Unfortunately, these racially offensive comments have come not only from peers, but also from faculty members.

> Even last year, I was talking to a professor who was writing me a letter of recommendation who told me, "I almost mentioned you were bilingual, but I couldn't remember if you were, so I left it off." And then she proceeds to go on for 20 minutes about the three people in our program who are fluently bilingual that when you look at them you would never guess they speak Spanish and so forth! So I just sit there trying not to roll my eyes and saying "Hey, we're all different! Just because I'm not fluent in Spanish doesn't mean Jack."

Interestingly, some of the microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009) Ingrid has received have been based on others' perceptions of what a Latina should be, and her failure to live up to this standard. Others' judgements around her racial identity is a form of minimizing her race based on false perceptions of what a Latina is

or is not. Ingrid has not only had to endure disparaging comments about her racial

"shortcomings," but has also had to witness overtly racially offensive remarks made to her

Latina colleague.

> You know, it's so stupid, the other grad students would joke about that they gave the other Latina a card with a Chihuahua on it, because she's Latina. It's so stupid that they're like harassing her about being Latina. These are type of dynamics where everything Latina would go to her, not to me.

> I do know that the other Latina in my cohort, that she has had much more challenges than I have, she has had some really racist things said to her. Things that haven't been said to me. Either that or I haven't recognized them. Even though people know I'm Latina, and I talk about Latina/o politics and research, I think I'm still read as being white due to my upbringing because I grew up middle-class and my family would now be considered upper middle-class. So I think I don't get questioned as much.

> Which in a way has been a real benefit for me because I don't have to deal with that kind of crap, but at the same time I think sometimes it shocks people some of the things that come out of my mouth because of my politics and my beliefs.

 Having to witness these racist interactions are a double edged sword for Ingrid. She has had to

be a bystander as another woman of color is disparaged due to race, while she has been accused

of not being ethnic enough. Ingrid acknowledges she has been privileged in many ways and has

had minimal challenges, while her colleague who is also Latina has dealt with racial

microaggressions (Pierce, 1995; Solorzano, Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, Solorzano, 2009)

much more frequently than Ingrid. Her ability to pass as white or being read as white have

shielded her from some of the harsher racial dynamics within her program and her doctoral

institution.

These sorts of experiences have certainly shaped Ingrid's perception of the professorate,

but have not completely deterred her from wanting to pursue a career as a faculty member in a

Research Intensive Institution. Ingrid discusses her sometimes shifting feelings regarding her

future scholarly career:

> I have times when I'm like "What am I doing?" "I hate my life." "Why am I putting myself through this?" "I can't believe I want to do this for the rest of my life." But then there at times when I think of what else I'd want to do, what I'd want to do instead, and I can't think of anything else that I'd want to do other than be an instructor, be a professor. I want to mentor students.

Like most participants in this study, a large part of Ingrid's motivation in pursuing the professorate is to support students, and specifically underrepresented students such as Latina/os.

> I've had two students tell me they've never had a Latina professor. I had a student who was in her 40's, and she told me I'm the first professor of color she's had her entire education! That's a sad statement if I'm the first professor of color they've ever had. It makes me sad, but it also makes me think I need to be in the classroom to show that "Hey, Latinos can do education, and it's not easy."

The knowledge that students still fail to have access to Latina/o faculty members within Research Intensive Institutions is startling for Ingrid, and serves as a motivator for her to pursue the professorate. She understands the power of having Latina/o role models within academic spaces, and she feels she can make a contribution to academia by offering the type of mentorship and support she has benefitted from in her own educational trajectory.

Ingrid has not been cooled out of the professorate during her doctoral socialization journey. Even though at times she has doubts about pursuing the professorate, she is still clear this is the career route she would like to pursue. Her fairly seamless doctoral route has been a large contributing factor. As she acknowledges, "I've been fortunate that the trials I've had to deal with have been super minor." Ingrid has enjoyed positive mentorship relationships, positive emotional support, insight into institutional "unwritten rules," and encouragement to pursue her scholarly career goals, all factors which have impacted her post-doctoral career goals.

Claudia

Claudia describes her doctoral experience as simply "amazing." She has been fortunate

enough to benefit from a supportive, well-structured doctoral program that has truly prioritized

investing in the success of its graduate students, and particularly women and students of color.

One of the multiple factors which have influenced her successful development as a Ph.D. student

is the high representation of women and women of color in her department. Describing her

doctorate, she states, "For the most part, it has worked for me. And that is because there are

people like me there! And I knew that I wasn't going to get that anywhere else." Claudia was

aware that the racial and gender makeup of her Ph.D. program was unique, that the diversity she

was enjoying was a rarity in doctoral programs.

Like most doctoral students, Claudia did face a few challenges during her first few years

of the Ph.D., but due to the level of support she received, they were not significant or

insurmountable. In fact, she describes her first year in the Ph.D. as "great."

> Obviously, the first year is crazy for everybody, but I really enjoyed it. The first year was great. I had really great classes. And it was great all around, I had no complaints about how things went. I think the program was really perfect for me. This is the experience I wish I had had since I started my educational career.

Claudia's experiences within her Master's graduate program may have helped in preparing her to

navigate the doctoral dynamics, such as how to conduct herself in graduate seminars. However,

the diversity of her program was a significant contributing factor:

> I don't know if it's because I have a Master's degree already, because I was under the assumption of "fake it until you make it," but I did enjoy being in class.

> Our program has received recognition [from various academic organizations] for being a great program for women and minorities. I did enjoy being in the classes. I didn't feel like I had a problem.

It is notable that her graduate program has been so intentional in supporting students of color,

that it has developed a reputation for being a positive space for underrepresented graduate

students. As is illustrated in Claudia's experience, the quality of mentorship offered may be largely why.

The Mentorship Experience

From very early on, Claudia felt she chose the right graduate program for herself. In addition to a racially and gendered diverse student body, the quality of mentorship she received truly impacted how prepared she felt to tackle the various roadblocks in the Ph.D. One example of this is seen in her experience with her doctoral qualifying exams. From very early on in the program, she and her colleagues received very specific and guided direction regarding what the exams would entail, and how they would need to prepare to successfully pass them.

> Comps [comprehensive exams]. That was really interesting. Compared to other programs, our program was really specific in helping the students do the comps well. So the Chair and the two other people I chose for my comps committee, they help you with practice questions and look at your practice answers and choosing your reading list. [The type of guidance included suggestions such as] "This is the comps, this is what I would look for, and this is what I want you to do." So my comps experience was really well guided, compared to other people who say "Well, I just had to read" or "I had to retake it."
>
> I didn't have to retake anything because of the way the comps system is setup, they actually start talking to you about it the first year. Actually, when you go visit [for graduate recruitment], they already start talking to you about comps [laughs] and about how comps are supposed to be and how your classes are supposed to be the preparation for it. So in that aspect, they're really really good about preparing you.

Claudia's description of her qualifying exam experience details how expectations around the exams were very clearly delineated, and how she was therefore empowered to do well in them. She is again aware that this level of mentorship is rare in many doctoral programs, as she has seen peers in other programs struggle with the qualifying exam process and be forced to retake exams when they are inadequately prepared.

Claudia's experiences around finding supportive faculty mentors during the doctorate did not begin on a positive note. However, due to her resourcefulness and self-advocacy, she was

eventually able to get her needs met and find mentors that suited her. She discusses the

challenge she initially faced in finding a good doctoral committee Chair.

> So I had originally chosen for my committee, so I had chosen somebody, but I think my interests were diverging, so I did make a change in one person who was going to be in my committee.

> At the beginning I had chosen a certain committee member who was supportive if you did things his way. He really was driving me towards a mixed methods, and that wasn't what I was interested in, I was becoming more interested in theory and things like that. So I decided to make the change when I saw that it wasn't going to work I immediately changed that.

Early on, Claudia was able to detect that this mentorship relationship would not be a fruitful one

for her. The methods she was interested in employing in her research did not align with her

faculty mentor's, and she sensed he would not be supportive if she did not abide by his academic

expectations. In fact, Claudia experience negative repercussions when she expressed

disagreement with his scholarly guidance.

> There was a time when, after the second year, I had this particular member of my committee, the person who wanted me to do mixed methods, I felt like he spoke to me about my project in front of other people, it was really like very not the nicest thing.

Claudia found the experience of being negatively spoken to regarding her work in front of others

upsetting. However, in seeking solace from that interaction, she found the faculty mentor that

was an excellent fit for her. She describes how this mentorship relationship developed, and how

it has been a positive guiding force in her doctoral socialization.

> The mentorship that I've received, I've been really lucky. The Chair [of my doctoral committee] is very good about really encouraging me to stay in academia.

> I went ahead and talked to another faculty who later became the Chair of my committee, and she told me…that my work had some meaning and it mattered even if this person [my initial faculty mentor] didn't think so. That's when I knew that this person was going to be a great mentor for me and that I was going to be a good mentee for her because we meshed well together. We both have the same type of quirky personality, so I think that really worked.

This faculty member's encouragement and validation was valuable to Claudia. It reassured her

of her academic potential, and provided the emotional support she needed in the face of a

difficult situation. Additionally, Claudia cites this mentor's personality as a factor in

determining a successful mentorship relationship. She not only fit well with Claudia's

personality, but was also highly regarded by other graduate students as a great mentor.

> I think it also worked that she's really good with her students and she's a very popular [doctoral committee] Chair for many people, she's really good with people.

> And she really is disciplined about for you actually moving forward. So I think it's her mentorship, it's her cheerleading that I can do some things. She has really demystified some processes, saying "You know what, you can do that. It's ok, you'll get past it, you're a really good student."

> So she'll give you the encouragement, but also the guidance about how to do things, how to apply for things, what looks good, what is possible. So I've gotten amazing feedback from my Chair.

Claudia's description of her doctoral committee Chair summarizes many of the valuable qualities

needed in an effective mentor. She not only provides emotional support in the form of

encouragement and validation, but she also offers instrumental support in helping her demystify

some of the unwritten doctoral processes and expectations Claudia will need to tackle to ensure

scholarly success. The effects of having an incredibly skilled mentor, in addition to having

equally supportive doctoral committee members, has enabled Claudia to really thrive in her

doctoral journey.

> My other committee members are great in other ways. Another one is great about being frank about what can be done with the methods that I've chosen. So when it comes to anything to do with methods, she's really good about doing that as well. If my Chair doesn't have the answer, she really encourages me to look for the answer.

Claudia is also very pragmatic about selecting mentors and navigating those relationships. She is

aware that a successful mentor/mentee relationship hinges on multiple factors, including working

214

styles, expectations, and personalities. For Claudia, this means sometimes being willing to be flexible, accepting, and sometimes patient.

> I think it's just talking to people, and it was mostly about personalities. I mean, who is going to help you with this, or who is interested in the type of methods that I am interested in. I think that's how I guided myself in how I was going to choose a committee.

> But it had to be people that mesh well together, because that's what they tell you. Not only do they have to mesh well together, but you are going to have to be able to work with all of them in different ways. People might be less likely to answer every email the second they get it, some of them might need a little more prodding, but you have to understand that you have to work with all of these people, and they have different personalities, but that they all need towards you finishing the Ph.D.

Claudia seems really well-informed regarding what mechanisms and strategies she should employ to ensure a smooth and successful doctoral experience. She is also very realistic about understanding that different faculty members will have different working styles that she needed to adapt to. However, for Claudia, as long as they were supporting her in moving along her doctorate and successfully finishing, she was able and willing to negotiate the various personalities and working styles of her committee members.

On Not Being Cooled Out

Claudia's doctoral socialization process exemplifies the ideal experience that produces successful Latina doctorates that will go on to pursue to the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions. Supportive colleagues, coupled with great mentorship, have truly empowered Claudia to move forward in her future profession in the professorate. She is optimistic and excited about the possibility of a career in university such as her doctoral institution. Unlike other participants in this study, Claudia would ideally like to end up as a faculty member in an institution just like her doctoral one. She describes her goals as she plans for her post-doctoral career:

> In going into the job market, I've seen that my Chair, her mentees have gone into tenure-track positions. So I feel that I will be guided to do the correct things to be able to go into the job market.

> But I do want to teach. I feel like I'll get good mentorship in that. I've gotten good mentorship so far, with enough independence, and I've been able to do very well with that.

Claudia expresses complete confidence in her mentor's ability to guide her well and prepare her to be competitive in the job market. This level of confidence and optimism hasn't been as reflected in the other participants. It speaks to the positive experiences Claudia has had within her department and with her mentor.

> So, I will be getting my degree from [name of doctoral institution omitted], and I would like to teach in an institution like that, that is research intensive, but is also private. That is what I would hope for. I could also see myself in a Hispanic Serving Institute. It has to be that it makes me happy as a person, not just as an academic.

The racial and gender dynamics in her doctoral program have also largely contributed to a rather positive Ph.D. education. She fears that she will not find the same level of support once she completes her doctorate.

> I've been hearing a lot of, like I've talked to various faculty of color who say they want to leave their positions even if they are offered tenure just because there is way of treating faculty of color that is racist…

> So that's my worry, about the department where I will end up in. Is it going to be as great as the department that I am in? Am I going to have to constantly deal with white supremacy? I'm really afraid of that, because I've been really sheltered in a program that is really feminist-oriented. So I'm really afraid of what kind of department I'll end up in. Is it in a department where I'll have to resist patriarchy or white supremacy?

It speaks volumes that Claudia has not only enjoyed a positive experience at the Ph.D., but that it has influenced her to want to build a career in that very same type of institution. In many ways, Claudia's doctoral journey is a model of how Latinas can be truly nurtured and supported to pursue careers within the professorate in research intensive institutions. It exemplifies how to improve the pipeline from the doctorate to the professorate for Latinas, specifically within

216

Research Intensive Institutions. Claudia beautifully summarizes her doctoral socialization

process and the power of a graduate education:

> I think for people who are first generation, or are from marginalized communities, the Ph.D. can be an extremely life changing experience, or it can be a negative experience that leaves them wondering why they even wanted to attend. For me, it has been a place where it is a nurturing program. It has been an **amazing** experience.

Conclusion

Mentorship and the role of faculty mentors in the socialization of Latinas during the doctorate was a central theme in this chapter. The quality and extent of mentorship participants received appeared to have a direct correlation with the level of success and satisfaction participants felt during their doctoral journey. Campbell and Campbell define mentorship as "any situation in which a more experienced member of an organization maintains a relationship with a less experienced, often new, member, and provides information, support, and guidance for the purpose of enhancing the latter's changes of organizational success" (Campbell, Campbell, 2007, p.136). Turner and Gonzalez describe mentoring within academia as "the process by which an experienced faculty member acts as a guide, role model, and teacher and sponsor of a graduate student or junior faculty member" (Ramirez, Mirande, 2015, p.162).

This is certainly reflected in the findings of this dissertation. The more specialized and personalized mentorship participants in this study received from faculty mentors, the better prepared they felt in navigating the doctorate and expectations along the doctoral journey. This research has illustrated the impact of access to mentorship (or the lack thereof) during the graduate application process, within the Ph.D. experience, and upon completion of the doctorate. Through the participants' stories, we have seen how guidance is crucial for Latinas to be able to select doctoral programs which fit their needs, to be granted admission into these program, to successfully navigate the doctorate, and to ensure a fruitful and long term professional career within the academy.

The graduate application process and the graduate education experience are comprised of unwritten rules and strategies which require specialized training and mentorship in order to not only be admitted into doctoral programs, but to also thrive within the doctorate and eventually be

marketable for the academic job market. Due to multiple institutional factors, Latinas continue to be numerical minorities within doctorate programs and within the professorate. Institutions of higher learning continue to be designed based on a white, masculinist, middle-class model. As a result, it is only too easy for Latinas to be excluded and pushed out from the academy. The need for explicit, directed and strategic mentorship is especially pertinent for underrepresented students in the academy, such as Latinas.

This research has provided examples of effective forms of mentorship which have incorporated academic professionalization and have helped decipher and translate the unwritten rules of the academy for Latina Ph.D. students. In this section, I will delineate various interventions as described in this research, and how they may be applied to doctoral program curriculums in order to facilitate student success.

Access to Information

Transparency and explicit information about processes is a major theme that emerged during this research. Selecting a doctoral program that best fits a student's needs and research interests, successfully being admitted into said program, and navigating and completing a doctoral program requires specific forms of knowledge and capital that are not easily available, particularly to underrepresented students. By design, the doctoral education process is one based on an apprenticeship model, where certain forms of information and skills are handed down from faculty mentors to student mentees. The transferal of information from mentors to students is highly dependent on the information offered by mentors, which varies depending on individual faculty mentorship styles and availability. What seems obvious in terms of expectations by faculty may not be obvious to students. The skills and academic practices developed by faculty are often skills acquired by virtue of being exposed to various forms of capital, forms of

knowledge often accessed through access to particular experiences. The importance of articulation and transparency when mentoring graduate students and junior faculty of color is crucial in supporting future faculty. The old attitude of "I did it, I overcame all of the traps and obstacles of the academy, so you can too" is simply not useful in supporting Latina graduate students and junior faculty in their navigation of the academy.

Transparency in the graduate application process became a central theme in Chapter 4. The overwhelming majority of participants felt they were not equipped with sufficient information regarding what to expect during the doctorate, how to select potential faculty mentors, how to research and negotiate the graduate funding process, and how to select an appropriate Ph.D. program once admitted. A large majority of participants "ended up" in their graduate programs due to convenience, lack of options, lack of information about which programs would be best suited for them, and a general lack of education about how to strategically navigate the graduate application process. As a result, most participants were not empowered in their graduate application process, and most entered the doctorate somewhat blindly. The negative repercussions of this lack of information was reflected in the feelings that many of the programs were not the best fit for them, and the realization that given more information, many participants would have chosen different doctoral programs. Key forms of information included topics such as the average size of cohorts within the program, diversity of student body and faculty, rate of employment among Ph.D. graduates, teaching opportunities, access to research centers, and the structure of their doctoral qualifying exams. The lack of transparency in the graduate application process also impacted the availability of resources for participants, including financial resources. Many participants struggled financially during the doctorate, or accrued large amounts of debt during the Ph.D., largely due to lack of information

about how to successfully apply for and access funding for the doctorate such as fellowships and grants. Although external support programs exist to assist underrepresented students during the doctoral application process, these programs are not always visible and accessible to all students. Additionally, even when participants in this study did access these programs, they did not always feel that the level of mentorship or guidance they received was sufficient to prepare them for the doctoral journey.

Mentorship

A central theme in this chapter was a lack of knowledge about how to find an effective mentor, as well as what information they should be receiving from their mentors regarding navigating the doctorate. All of the participants understood there were structures and procedures within the doctoral socialization experience they needed to adhere to in order to become successful academics. However, many had little knowledge regarding what information they should be receiving until they faced difficulties as a result of their lack of knowledge. As the expression states, **"You don't know what you don't know";** without knowing what questions to ask of their advisors, participants were highly dependent on the information mentors chose to share. Many had to learn about unwritten rules in the Ph.D. through trial and error. This sometimes had minimally negative consequences, while at times the effects of this lack of knowledge and support were quite significant. From struggling to pass doctoral qualifying exams, to finding sources of funding, to prolonging the amount of time it took to complete the doctorate, to failing to publish their academic work, the lack of training of participants significantly affected how they were socialized as academics and future professors. Most significantly, a lack of support and mentorship sometimes translated into being "cooled out" of the academy and the professorate in varying degrees.

Mentorship was sometimes described as "support" by participants, and the types of support they desired varied, from emotional to structural support. In <u>Modeling Mentoring Across Race/Ethnicity and Gender: Practices to Cultivate the Next Generation of Diverse Faculty</u>, Turner and Gonzalez discuss this very issue. One central finding in their work is the value of "demystifying the academy" for academics of color, how they are "socialized on the values, unwritten rules, and culture of academe" (Turner, Gonzalez, 2015, p.5).   They describe this demystification as teaching future faculty and academics the "nuances" of how academia functions from an "insider" perspective (Turner, Gonzalez, 2015, p.5).

Turner and Gonzalez illustrate a key point in their discussion of demystifying the academy through mentorship. The notion of being taught how to navigate academia by an "insider" is significant when discussing Latinas in the doctorate. As women of color have traditionally been excluded from these spaces, their position as outsiders is deeply felt in their experiences as scholars. Having faculty mentors who translate some of the codes of academe, particularly faculty mentors who have successfully become "insiders" by navigating the Ph.D. themselves can be a key element in moving through uncharted waters of the doctorate. This form of mentorship is structural in nature; it involves sharing information and knowledge needed to meet the challenges during the doctorate. The women in this dissertation all described the desire and need for information about how to approach structural barriers or challenges, such as navigating qualifying exams, funding opportunities, teaching, publishing, and networking. Without this "insider" information, many felt their success and opportunities for success were limited.

In this study, participants described the need for two types of support, instrumental and emotional support. Scholars of mentorship differentiate between two different "mentoring

functions: career/instrumental and emotional/psychological support" (Ramirez, Mirande, 2015, p.162). Instrumental support can be defined as "mentorship that helps advance a mentee's career," and emotional support may be defined as consisting of "counseling, friendship, acceptance, and confirmation" (Ramirez, Mirande, 2015, p.162).

Emotional support was a significant theme which emerged in the interviews during this study. Emotional support included encouragement, unconditional backing, lack of judgement when students faced setbacks, and generally support which moved beyond instruction and sharing of information. Emotional support was described as mentorship which took into account not only participants' academic contributions and potential, but also considered the emotional challenges students would or might face during the doctorate, particularly as Latinas within white masculinist institutions like academe. Turner and Gonzalez describe this type of mentorship as psychological support (Turner, Gonzalez, 2001). The majority of participants discussed how important emotional support from faculty mentors was in their doctoral journey. They utilized words and phrases such as "allies," "unconditional support," "lack of judgment," "more than a mentor, but a friend," and "family" to describe faculty mentors which offered emotional support. The specific forms of emotional support cited included feeling they could ask questions of their mentors about academia without fear of judgement or negative consequences. Another form of emotional support cited was "unconditional support," or the ability to make mistakes and be able to recover from them without being dismissed as failures. Qualities such as compassion, patience, empathy and kindness were seen as valuable by mentees in their mentors. Several participants described feeling like their most effective mentors weren't just academic advisors, but that these faculty members became their "friends" or "family."

Having an emotional connection to counter the negative emotional experiences they faced as Latinas during the Ph.D. was significant in their socialization.

Many described receiving validation around the insecurities and fears they faced during the doctorate from mentors. Hearing a person of authority and role model affirm their feelings as normal, hearing faculty reassure them in the face of feeling inadequate, or hearing faculty mentors echo their experiences of racism and sexism within the academy were all described as powerful experiences of support for participants. The emotional support was validating in battling experiences of isolation within their departments or institutions. Most participants were the only or one of few Latinas in their departments or their academic institutions. As seen in the women's narratives, being a minority in these spaces was not always easy to navigate. As described in Chesney-Lind ET AL. "…discussing everyday problems among women and members of other marginalized groups…can reveal the hidden oppressive relations resting below the surface of everyday interactions" (Chesney-Lind ET AL., 2006, p.14). It provides a name to what multiple marginalized individuals are experiencing, and it allows them to not only receive validation, but also build solidarity with others. Feminist mentorship in the form of emotional support not only provides relief for the mentee, but it is also a form of political action by empowering mentees, such as Latinas, to navigate and succeed in academic institutions which have excluded them for far too long (Chesney-Lind ET AL., 2006).

There are multiple models of mentorship, but many are based on a traditional model that is directive and hierarchical. According to Benishek, this model can be problematic for women and people of color, as it is based on "paternalistic ideologies and male models of development and perpetuate the view that one style of mentoring will meet the majority of mentees' professional development needs" (Benishek, 2004, p.432). As products of a long established

apprenticeship system, faculty mentors may sometimes unknowingly be reproducing a patriarchal, "one size fits all" mode of mentorship which does not serve marginalized graduate students such as Latinas well. A multicultural feminist model of mentorship is one that doesn't deny the existence of a power relationship between mentor and mentee, but attempts to acknowledge it in multiple ways in order to create a more fruitful relationship and actually empower the mentee (Benishek, 2004). A multicultural feminist model of mentorship is also one that is relational in nature and based on open communication and collaboration between the mentor and mentee (Benishek, 2004).

The problem of obtaining effective, directed, and specialized mentorship isn't simply to blame on bad or lazy faculty mentors. It is an institutional issue that sets up faculty members, particularly women and faculty of color, in a system that does not always value the importance of student mentorship or penalizes faculty for doing it. "Minority and women faculty are often sought out by students looking for a mentor who understands racism and sexism. These students are often experiencing marginalization on campus, and they see faculty who understand these pressures as essential to their survival on campus" (Chesney-Lind ET AL., 2006, p.7). This, coupled with the fact that minority and women faculty are often vastly underrepresented on college campuses often means that these few faculty members often have very heavy student mentee loads. Additionally, service work such as providing mentorship and support to students is not always valued for faculty, particularly for obtaining tenure or professional promotions. Thus, this further exacerbates the problem, often forcing faculty to do the work of mentorship with little professional and institutional support and in addition to an already large workload (Chesney-Lind ET AL., 2006). Women and faculty of color experience many of the systematic exclusions which Latinas face in graduate programs; they are often fighting an uphill battle in a

quest for tenure, institutional support, and legitimacy. "…Being marginal, a minority, and untenured has many negative consequences that threaten to crush women and scholars of color in the academy. More specifically, it forces women and scholars of color to confront…significant devaluation of their work, and a profound isolation" (Chesney-Lind ET AL., 2006).

Fostering a productive mentor/mentee relationship is complicated, and dependent on various factors, including shared research interests, working styles, communication around expectations, organizational styles, as well as personality differences. Having a better understanding of how to negotiate these relationships is useful in empowering graduate students to have better and more fruitful relationships with their mentors. Within this discussion, it is important to include conversations about different forms of mentorship, how to effectively create a doctoral dissertation committee, and how different faculty mentors may play differing roles and fill different needs for doctoral students. Understanding what doctoral students can realistically ask for from their mentors in regards to support may also help empower Ph.D. students to better advocate for themselves and have their needs better met.

Doctoral programs need to be more deliberate in how Ph.D. students are trained to not only become researchers and educators, but how to navigate the academy successfully. As illustrated by various participants in this study, this should entail workshops or courses specifically designed around discussing the professionalization of doctoral students. If the Ph.D. is designed as an apprenticeship to create future professors and researchers, it is essential that doctoral students are taught how to not only succeed within the Ph.D., but also ensure longevity within the academy. This includes conversations such as the importance of presenting at conferences, how to develop effective relationships with faculty mentors, how to navigate doctoral qualifying exams, how to teach courses effectively, and how to obtain funding in the

forms of grants and fellowships. Within these conversations, the necessity for attention to detail is significant. For example, it is not enough to tell graduate students that they must submit to conferences, but it is necessary to discuss how to submit proposals or abstracts to conferences in ways that will guarantee successfully being accepted, which particular conferences are important within their fields of study, how to present research posters and papers once admitted into a conference, and how to network with other academics within conference settings. The same form of specificity is also needed for publishing academic papers. It is not sufficient to tell graduate students that publishing is essential for success in the academy without delineating how to develop publishable papers, how to utilize writing assignments and research projects from doctoral courses to develop publishable pieces, how to edit papers, how to co-author papers, as well as which academic journals are valuable in particular fields. Navigating funding sources is also an essential conversation that is often overlooked, and it is essential not only due to the importance of providing financial support, but also for the networks and resources that various sources of funding sometimes offer. For example, teaching students how to competitively apply for prestigious fellowships such as the Ford Foundation Fellowship would help ensure greater success in obtaining this funding, which also connects students with resources through the Ford network.

Participants illustrated various methods for providing more effective professionalization within the doctorate. One powerful example was the creation of a course specifically dedicated to socializing Ph.D. students to be successful within academia. As Lily described, she had a mentor whose course focused on providing information on how to navigate the academy by providing very specific and detailed discussions of which conferences she should apply to, how to apply to the Ford Foundation Fellowship, how to craft publishable papers, which academic

journals she should submit to be published, and how to approach the academic job market. As Lily describes, this course was very effective in producing successful academics, as the majority of this faculty member's mentees had obtained generous funding fellowships and grants, many were published as graduate students, and many were successful in obtaining academic employment within the professorate.

Another effective intervention which was illustrated in this research was the use of regularly scheduled workshops discussing professionalization hosted by doctoral departments. As described by Brenda, organizing a series of workshops on various socialization topics and asking departmental faculty to lead at least one workshop was an easy way to provide some information about demystifying the academic route. The workshops discussed topics focused not only on navigating the doctorate, but also on how to apply to academic employment. This included discussions such as how to prepare a "job talk," how to conduct oneself during on-campus visits for potential employment, what to expect during the process, how to formulate an effective cover letter and curriculum vitae, and how to negotiate salary packages. Although the workshops were perhaps less intimate and provided less individual attention, they still served as a valuable and effective method of providing graduate students with some of the tools needed to succeed in the academy. As discussed previously, providing this type of information to doctoral students was essential in ensuring their success within the academy not only during the Ph.D., but also after completing the doctorate.

Mentorship does not have to be a one-sided relationship where only the mentee benefits from the dynamic. Faculty mentors may also benefit from participating in a mentor-mentee relationship that is extensive and specialized. Wilde argues that in studies of mentorship of

graduate students, faculty also report their own growth as a result of the experience (Wilde, 1991).

On Being Cooled Out of the Professorate

All of the participants in this study pursued their doctorates within Research Intensive Institutions. Most of the participants described being surprised about what they faced during the doctorate. They came in having some expectations about what they would experience during their doctoral education, and were often unpleasantly surprised by what they faced at some point during the Ph.D. Experiences such as racism, isolation, classism and sexism were often cited as negatively impacting their doctoral experiences. These experiences certainly impacted their desire to pursue the professorate within Research Intensive Institutions. However, there were specific factors within their experiences which truly impacted their future career goals, particularly within academia. For some, these factors played a significant role in cooling them out of professorate within Research Intensive Institutions.

In this discussion, I will be employing Bob Clark's theory of "cooling out" as a theoretical framework which may be applied to the pipeline from the doctorate to the professorate within Research Intensive Institutions. Irving Goffman originally coined the theory, "cooling the mark out," which describes how an institution can pull off a con or fraud on a victim while not being suspected of doing so (Goffman, 1952; Clark, 1960, 1980). Bob Clark reframed the term to "the cooling out function" to discuss the experience of marginalized students at community colleges. "The cooling out function" describes the phenomenon experienced by many students of color, women, LGBT and working class students who enter the community college with aspirations of transferring to 4 year universities and obtaining a Bachelor's degree, but are dissuaded and deterred from doing so by institutional factors.

Additionally, because of their social identities, these students are not seen as worthy or possessing the potential to transfer to four-year universities, and are both overtly and insidiously tracked away from the route to transfer. In essence, their dreams of obtaining a Bachelor's degree from a four-year university are "cooled out."

In Clark's analysis, he described how underserved students who entered community colleges with the goal of transferring to 4 year universities were "cooled out" of these aspirations by various structural factors. Due to obstacles faced by underrepresented students, they were often trained, encouraged, guided and directed to pursue a less rigorous route or a vocational route. Because the institutions and institutional members did not see these students as "college material," as possessing the ability or potential to successfully transfer to four year institutions, they were not given the support and mentorship they needed to successfully achieve their goals. For students who were "cooled out," they reimagined and reconfigured their goals to fit these low expectations.

In this dissertation, I argue that Latinas in doctoral programs within Research Intensive Institutions often experience a form of being "cooled out" of the goal of pursuing the professorate within Research Intensive Institutions. Many enter the Ph.D. with the hopes of becoming a professor, but during doctoral socialization, these goals are reimagined and adjusted. While this reimagining of goals could simply be as a result of gaining more information about what the professorate within Research Institutions entails, I argue that the ways in which Latinas experience doctoral socialization make pursuing a career in the professorate within research intensive institutions largely unattainable and undesirable. As Latinas face particular challenges within their doctoral training, their future goals are increasingly altered away from the professorate in research institutions, and the pipeline from the doctorate to the professorate for

230

Latinas is affected. While Clark described the process of cooling out as a strictly negative experience involving settling for a lesser option, I argue that the cooling out function as it is applied in this research functions within various levels and degrees and is much more nuanced than this. For example, a Latina who enters the doctorate thinking she will pursue a career in the professorate may completely be cooled out of the academy during the Ph.D., and choose a non-academic career. Another Latina doctoral student may be somewhat cooled out, in that she realizes during her Ph.D. that the professorate within particular institutions may not be the right fit for her, but the professorate within a different type of institution still seems appealing. While the pipeline from the doctorate to the professorate in an R1 has been affected, and the reasons she may not want to reimagine her career choices are a direct result of being a woman of color in a white masculinist institution, she has not been completely pushed out of the academy.

In addition to the mentorship experience, several patterns emerged as contributing to being cooled out of the professorate during the process of doctoral socialization, including departmental demographics, collegial support, teaching experiences, support (instrumental and emotional) received by mentors, and a desire to have work life balance.

The departmental demographics of participants sometimes played a large role in how participants experienced their doctoral socialization. Being the only Latina within their department, or one of few racial minorities within the department added to feelings of isolation and challenges in obtaining emotional support from colleagues. The experience of validation by colleagues as a form of emotional support in endorsing common experiences faced by women of color in particular spaces provided a buffer to white masculinist ideologies present in the academy. When the demographics of their doctoral departments were not racially or gender diverse, the participants faced greater challenges in feeling comfortable within their academic

department. Even when they found other students or faculty with similar experiences or identities outside their department, their isolated experiences within their home departments impacted how they viewed their doctoral experience. Departmental demographics affected experiences such as the types of conversation about gender and race that occurred in required courses, the types of research being developed and shared by doctoral students, as well as the forms of structural support received from faculty and colleagues within their department. The experience of being the only Latina or one of very few Latinas or students of color within a department and/or within the larger campus was significantly jarring for some participants, it led to multiple challenges during their doctorate. As a result, some wished to avoid repeating that experience within the professorate by avoiding pursuing careers where Latinas are still a significant numerical minority, such as the professorate in research intensive institutions.

Departmental demographics were not only significant amongst colleagues, but also within faculty in their departments. Although students were able to find emotional and structural support among faculty who were not Latinas in their department, seeing another Latina in the position of the professorate provided them with role models and encouragement regarding their own hopes of being in the academy. Although the presence of Latina faculty members within their home departments did not guarantee obtaining the mentorship they needed, it sometimes did allow them to feel they had an ally who understood the value of their research. Conversely, at times finding that the Latina faculty members within their department were not great mentors or supportive of other Latinas had the effect of cooling out participants. Expectations around mentorship were perhaps higher for Latina faculty members, and when they failed to meet these, participants experienced greater disappointment. Some participants also witnessed the negative experiences faced by women of color faculty within their department, and feared they would

232

experience similar challenges in the professorate. Several participants viewed these faculty members as examples of what not to do or what to avoid becoming in the future in their careers. Witnessing health issues, mental health issues, emotional problems, discrimination and exclusion faced by Latina faculty in their departments made the professorate, particularly within research intensive institutions, a less desirable option. Participants associated some of the struggles faced by Latina faculty as a direct result of the politics of exclusion present in many academic spaces, and thus felt that the same hardships and consequences they witnessed were inevitable for them if they entered the professorate.

Collegial support was significant in impacting whether or how much participants felt cooled out of the professorate during the Ph.D. When they found forms of structural and emotional support from colleagues, it contributed largely to having a positive experience in navigating the doctorate. Structural support such as studying together, preparing for qualifying exams together, editing each other's academic work, presenting at and attending conferences together, and sharing information and resources about academic opportunities were all seen as the benefits of collegial support. Emotional support in the form of commiserating about challenges during the doctorate, of providing social outlets, of validating their experiences as Latinas within academia, and of creating spaces where they interacted with others who shared similar identities was also significant. Receiving collegial support often served to supplement the support they received from faculty mentors, and occasionally it was the only form of support they received during doctoral socialization. Having access to a strong network of peers facilitated the navigation process during the Ph.D., and contributed to participant success. This in turn contributed to more positive experiences and greater optimism about a future within the academy.

Conversely, negative interactions with colleagues did impact the desire to pursue a future in the professorate. Several participants cited the lack of social skills by academics as a deterrent in pursuing the professorate. Like other studies have discussed, most participants experienced or witnessed verbal posturing (Burciaga, 2007) by doctoral peers as a form of intimidation or to establish status. Not wanting to work with "crazy academics," or individuals they felt were unpleasant to work with impacted levels of optimism came up as a main deterrent to a career in the professorate. Some feared that the professorate and research intensive institutions fostered competitive environments, and they wished to avoid such dynamics with peers in their future careers.

Teaching experiences and how much teaching was or was not valued within their institutions also played a role in cooling out participants from the professorate, specifically from research intensive institutions. Many participants discovered they enjoyed teaching during the doctorate. Several felt teaching was one of few positive experiences they had during their doctoral training. Other participants saw the power of being a Latina within these academic spaces and the need for more role models and mentors to support students of color within university settings. Teaching allowed some participants to feel connected to students and see tangible results during an isolating and sometimes confusing doctoral experience. Many completed the doctorate knowing they wanted to continue within academia in order to inspire future students of color and change the lives of underrepresented students. However, most participants witnessed how little value was placed on teaching within research intensive institutions. They understood that pursuing a career within research intensive institutions would require their energy to be focused on producing research, with teaching and student mentorship much less prioritized. Additionally, teaching in campus communities where students of color

234

were a significant minority was not appealing to many. They wanted to work where they would be able to reach a larger number of underrepresented students, and they felt research intensive institutions would not be that place. Thus, many cited the desire to pursue the professorate, but at a Teaching Institution, or within community colleges. A few participants entered the doctorate having taught at various educational levels, from K-12 to university settings, and initially entered thinking they wanted to utilize the Ph.D. to teach at research intensive institutions. However, after their experiences with teaching in their doctoral programs, they realized they wanted to continue teaching, but within academic institutions that were not research intensive institutions.

The desire to have a work life balance in their future careers was also a cause for Latinas being cooled out of the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions. Most participants had a desire to be married and/or partnered and have children. Others acknowledged these difficult choices the academy asks of them, but are willing to make those difficult choices in the future. As Rebecca Burciaga argued, the professorate may be a career path designed for "family-free" people that can invest a great deal of personal time (Burciaga, 2007). Many participants looked to their doctoral faculty mentors as role models and examples of what a career within the professorate might resemble. As a result, when participants witnessed the extensive demands for their time that faculty faced in Research Intensive Institutions, and how these demands impacted their family and personal lives, it sometimes became a significant deterrent in pursuing the professorate within particular institutions. Participants cited seeing their faculty mentors sacrificing their marriages and personal relationships for their careers. They witnessed divorces that were a direct result of the demands of the professorate. They were sometimes explicitly told that both achieving tenure and having a family were not possible for Latinas in Research Intensive Institutions. For some, they felt they had forfeited a great deal of their personal life

during the doctorate, and did not wish to do the same in their future careers. Some distinctly made the choice to postpone developing personal romantic relationships during graduate study, or prioritized their pursuit of the Ph.D. over their romantic lives, foregoing personal relationships, suffering broken romantic relationships or experiencing strained familial relationships as a result. While they felt the investment in time and energy and the personal sacrifices were worth it to complete their doctoral degrees, they did not have the desire to make similar sacrifices in their post-doctoral careers and could not imagine having to sustain that type of lifestyle in the long term. For some, they felt they could achieve a greater work-life balance if they pursued the professorate within Teaching Institutions or Community Colleges. For a few, they felt a career outside of academia altogether would be the best way to achieve this.

Agency and Choices

There exists a certain level of pressure for Latinas in Research Intensive doctorate programs to pursue scholarly careers within Research Intensive Institutions, even as they receive messages of rejection all along the doctoral socialization. Tara Watford's work discussed how women in her study in Ph.D. programs had to hide their aspirations for non-academic careers or careers outside of Research Institutions due to fear of facing negative consequences (Watford, 2007). It is a confusing and perplexing position to be in to receive messages of exclusion and receive minimal institutional support, while also being expected to pursue careers in similar institutions post-doctorate. As discussed previously, when Latinas choose to pursue careers outside of Research Intensive Institutions, many discuss making the conscious choice to be employed in environments where they will be able to support and work with more students of color. Thus, while many Latinas may be cooled out of the professorate in Research Institutions, how much of their post-doctoral career choices are a form of practicing agency?

Many participants in this study also employed forms of internal resistance (Solorzano, Bernal, 2001), they made choices that may appear to be conforming to cultural or institutional norms while very "consciously engaging in a critique of oppression" (Solorzano, Bernal, 2001, p.324). For example, all of the participants discussed wanting to empower other students of color in higher education. Some chose to do so by pursuing a career in Research Intensive Institutions, where they felt it is important to be a role model and be visible for students of color in these spaces. Others discussed wanting to make interventions for students of color and marginalized students at the community college, being able to change students' lives at their point of entry into higher education to inspire them to continue their education.

These women's stories conjure up questions of choice versus socialization. For example, is choosing to teach at a community college, considered less prestigious in academia, an instance of being "cooled out"? Is it only considered "cooled out" if the choice not to pursue Research Intensive professorates is directly related to the negative experiences and lack of mentorship during the doctorate? Would some of the women choosing careers where their teaching is valued and where they may connect with students of color choose otherwise if Research Intensive Institutions were more supportive of their needs as academics? Or is it simply a mismatch of career goals and institutional demands?

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the following research questions: How do institutional and interpersonal factors affect Latina doctoral educational experiences in Research Intensive Institutions? How do these factors influence their pursuit of professional careers in the academy? How do Latina doctoral students in these Research Intensive Institutions respond to these institutional and interpersonal factors?

Within this research, I explored various aspects of the doctoral and post-doctoral experience. One hypothesis I presented at the onset of this project was whether Latinas experience a "cooling out" of their academic career goals in the process of their doctoral socialization. I wanted to explore if some Latinas who enter Research Intensive Institutions with the intention of going on to pursue scholarly careers in these same types of institutions alter their professional goals due to their experiences during the Ph.D. Additionally, I wanted to examine the forms of professional development Latinas received when they chose to pursue academic careers; how are they prepared or unprepared for the academic job market? I also explored how their racial or gender identities play a role in this socialization. In Chapters 4 and 5, I extensively addressed the research questions around the experiences of mentorship and professional development for the participants in this study. In this chapter, I will propose directions for how this research may be expanded in the future, and the significance of this scholarly work in the field of women of color in doctoral education (i.e. Social Sciences and Humanities).

The overarching theme which has emerged in this dissertation is the power of mentorship, and more specifically, the importance of faculty mentorship in the doctoral socialization experience for Latinas within Research Intensive Institutions. This research has illustrated the impact of access to mentorship (or the lack thereof) during the graduate

238

application process, within the Ph.D. experience, and upon completion of the doctorate. Through the participants' stories, we have seen how mentorship is crucial for Latinas to be able to select doctoral programs that fit their needs, to be granted admission into these programs, to successfully navigate the doctorate, and to ensure a fruitful and long term professional career within the academy.

The graduate application process and the graduate education experience are comprised of unwritten rules and strategies that require specialized training and mentorship in order to not only be admitted into doctoral programs, but to also thrive within the Ph.D. and eventually be marketable for the academic job market. The need for explicit, directed and strategic mentorship is especially pertinent for underrepresented students in the academy, such as Latinas. Due to multiple institutional factors, Latinas continue to be numerical minorities within doctorate programs and within the professorate. Institutions of higher learning continue to be designed based on a white, masculinist, middle-class model. As a result, it is only too easy for Latinas to be excluded and pushed out from the academy.

This study has provided examples of effective forms of mentorship which have incorporated academic professionalization and have helped decipher and translate the unwritten rules of the academy for Latina Ph.D. students. This dissertation has also illustrated ineffective forms of mentorship or challenges in the mentorship experience.

Recommendations

Fostering a productive mentor/mentee relationship is complicated, and dependent on various factors, including shared research interests, working styles, communication around expectations, organizational styles, as well as personality differences. Having a better understanding of how to negotiate these relationships is useful in empowering graduate students

to have better and more fruitful relationships with their mentors. Within this discussion, it is important to include conversations about different forms of mentorship, how to effectively create a doctoral dissertation committee, and how different faculty mentors may play differing roles and fill different needs for Ph.D. students. Understanding what doctoral students can realistically ask for from their mentors in regards to support may also help empower Ph.D. students to better advocate for themselves and have their needs met.

Doctoral programs need to be more deliberate in how Ph.D. students are trained to not only become researchers and educators, but how to navigate the academy successfully. As illustrated by various participants in this study, this should entail workshops or courses specifically designed around discussing the professionalization of doctoral students. If the Ph.D. is designed as an apprenticeship to create future professors and researchers, it is essential that doctoral students are taught how to not only succeed within the Ph.D., but also ensure longevity within the academy. This includes conversations such as the importance of presenting at conferences, how to develop effective relationships with faculty mentors, how to navigate doctoral qualifying exams, how to teach courses effectively, and how to obtain funding in the forms of grants and fellowships. Within these conversations, the necessity for attention to detail is significant. For example, it is not enough to tell graduate students that they must submit to conferences, but it is necessary to discuss how to submit proposals or abstracts to conferences in ways that will guarantee successfully being accepted. In addition, details such as which particular conferences are important within their fields of study, how to present research posters and papers once admitted into a conference, and how to network with other academics within conference settings. The same form of specificity is also needed for publishing academic papers. It is not sufficient to tell graduate students that publishing is essential for success in the academy.

It is necessary to delineate the details behind the art of publishing, such as how to develop

publishable papers, how to utilize writing assignments and research projects from doctoral

courses to develop publishable pieces, how to edit papers, how to co-author papers, as well as

which academic journals are valuable in particular fields. Navigating funding sources is also an

essential conversation that is often overlooked, and it is essential not only due to the importance

of providing financial support, but also for the networks and resources that various sources of

funding sometimes offer. For example, teaching students how to competitively apply for

prestigious external fellowships would help ensure greater success in obtaining this funding,

which also connects students with resources with various networks.[27]

      Another "glaring omission" within doctoral professionalization is the discussion of

various types of higher education institutions. Within this research, most participants were not

fully aware of the differences between Research Intensive Institutions, Liberal Arts Colleges, and

Teaching Institutions. More importantly, most of the women entered doctoral programs and

built their graduate careers with little knowledge as to how to be competitive for employment

within each of these types of institutions. They also were not fully cognizant of the different

types of populations they might be serving in these spaces. Additionally, few understood the

different employment demands of the professorate until late in their doctoral education or until

they entered the academic job market. Most participants simply thought they wanted to be

professors when they entered the Ph.D., with little awareness of what that might look like based

on the type of institutions in which they might work. Professional development early in the

Ph.D. would empower doctoral students to make informed choices about their future careers and

would allow them to be more strategic in the choices they make and the skills they build during

---

[27] Such as the Ford Foundation Diversity Pre-Doctoral and Dissertation Fellowship as examples of graduate and post-graduate networks.

the doctorate. Offering different perspectives of potential career choices post-Ph.D. via workshops, professionalization courses, or alumni panels are some of the potential ways in which this type of professionalization could be offered. Of course, this would demand a disruption in the apprenticeship model often practiced within Research Intensive Institutions that favors careers in those universities and rejects other career options as less desirable or prestigious. Some participants shared that they were discouraged from pursuing careers outside of Research Intensive Institutions during their doctorate, and were explicitly warned that expressing non-research career interests could impact the level of mentorship and departmental investment they received. Mentoring for future careers in Research Intensive Institutions should also include more than how to develop research, but should ideally also train doctoral students to teach and mentor in order to ensure they will have multiple skill sets and multiple career options upon completing the Ph.D.

Participants illustrated various methods for providing more effective professionalization within the doctorate. One powerful example was the creation of a course specifically dedicated to socializing Ph.D. students to be successful within academia. As Lily described, she had a mentor whose course focused on providing information on how to navigate the academy by providing very detailed discussions of which conferences she should apply to, how to apply to external fellowships, how to craft publishable papers, which academic journals she should submit to be published, and how to approach the academic job market. This course was very effective in producing successful academics, as the majority of this faculty member's mentees had obtained generous funding fellowships and grants, many were published as graduate students, and many were successful in obtaining academic employment within the professorate.

An alternative intervention which was illustrated in this research was the use of regularly scheduled workshops discussing professionalization hosted by doctoral departments. As described by Brenda, organizing a series of workshops on various socialization topics and asking departmental faculty to lead at least one workshop was an easy way to provide some information about demystifying the academic route. The workshops discussed topics focused not only on navigating the doctorate, but also on how to apply to academic employment. This included discussions such as how to prepare a "job talk," how to conduct oneself during on-campus visits for potential employment, what to expect during the process, how to formulate an effective cover letter and curriculum vitae, and how to negotiate salary packages. Although the workshops were perhaps less intimate and provided less individual attention, they still served as a valuable and effective method of providing graduate students with some of the tools needed to succeed in the academy. As discussed previously, providing this type of information to doctoral students was essential in ensuring their success within the academy not only during the Ph.D., but also after completing the doctorate.

The use of external organizations dedicated to providing professionalization support to graduate students was also discussed as another way to provide doctoral mentorship. As one participant described, this resource offered many of the tools she needed to understand the inner-workings of the academy and how to navigate multiple academic worlds. If doctoral programs are not equipped with providing socialization and professional development workshops, courses, or events, one way of providing more support to their students is to build networks with external organizations and connect their students to these resources.

Finally, providing support to underrepresented students prior to beginning the doctorate in the form of "summer bridge" programs is another way to prepare students for the demands of

the Ph.D. These types of programs allow students who are identified as higher risk or are underrepresented to take graduate courses during the summer prior to entering the doctorate and begin building relationships with faculty. This head start can be useful in helping students become acclimated to doctoral study and easing into this life transition earlier. While many universities offer "summer bridge" programs for graduate students, not all academic departments are aware of these resources or are proactive in encouraging their underrepresented students to take advantage of these programs.

This research illustrates the impact of mentorship on producing professorate in Research Intensive Institutions. Providing guided and effective mentorship to doctoral students does not necessarily require a great deal of financial investment or expenditure of resources. Through the use of multiple creative methods, Ph.D. programs could be better equipped to support their students and ensure their success, including Latinas. This dissertation is valuable, as it gives voice to some of the mentorship experiences of Latinas, as well as models of how successful mentorship practices can be implemented.

Future Directions

This research provides an important intervention in exploring the experiences of Latinas within doctoral education, and in examining the educational pipeline from the doctorate to the professorate for Latinas. As was illustrated in this dissertation, even when Latinas are successful in completing the doctorate, they are not always supported to succeed in the next phase of their professional trajectories. This study argues that the forms of doctoral socialization directly impact the presence of Latina faculty in Research Intensive Institutions.

Why is it significant if Latinas want to pursue a career in the professorate within research intensive institutions? Why does it matter how doctoral programs and doctoral training may be

impacting the pipeline from the Ph.D. to Research Intensive Institutions for Latinas? As discussed, Latinas are largely underrepresented within these spaces. This impacts the experiences of students of color and first generation students within universities. Seeing a Latina professor and being able to have Latinas as faculty mentors and role models impacts their feelings of belonging at these universities. Having faculty members who understand their struggles as marginalized students and can provide the support they need to navigate these institutions is significant. Additionally, Research Intensive Institutions are sites of knowledge production. The presence of Latinas within these spaces largely affects what forms of research are produced, whose voices are being represented, and whose narratives are shared.

This research has made an important contribution in adding to the emerging research on the experiences of Latinas in graduate education. It is also building on the field of mentorship in doctoral education, a field which is largely undeveloped, especially within doctoral studies. In developing this field, my study lays the groundwork for future scholarship exploring these issues. One powerful contribution in this dissertation is my discussion of the cooling out function as a theoretical tool. Prior to this study, the cooling out function had only been employed as a theory describing the process by which underrepresented students are tracked into vocational programs within the community college and out of the 4-year university transfer route. My research opens up the space to explore how the cooling out function can be applied as a theoretical framework in other areas of higher education. Specifically, my research has opened the door to explore how pipelines in higher education, such as graduate education, are impacted by racialized and gendered dynamics.

There are multiple ways in which the mentorship experience of graduate students, particularly graduate students of color, can be explored further. For example, a similar study

could be conducted in Ethnic Studies and Gender Studies programs specifically. In graduate programs where the majority of students are underrepresented in regards to gender and race, it would be useful to examine how power dynamics and mentorship experiences are manifested (such as in the natural and physical sciences) within these spaces. For instance, does having a critical mass of students of color in a doctoral program help mitigate some of the obstacles faced by the participants in this study?

Another potential future direction of this research is a comparative study between different disciplines to explore how mentorship is experienced by Latinas in diverse doctoral programs. For example, do Latinas in STEM fields have more difficulty than Latinas in other fields, (such as the humanities or social sciences) in finding effective mentorship? What are the different mentorship models practiced in the diverse fields, and what is the impact of these types of mentorships on post-doctoral careers?

There is a great deal of research that may be developed as a result of this study. For example, this research may be expanded further through investigating the experience of mentorship from faculty mentors' perspectives. It would be particularly useful to discuss how mentorship is practiced by faculty members who have been identified as successful and supportive mentors of multiple students of color. Within graduate programs, there are often specific faculty members who have developed a reputation for being very supportive of graduate students of color. It would be useful to understand how they approach mentorship, how they learned to become such effective mentors, and how they themselves were mentored during their graduate education. Their stories could offer models on strategic interventions they have practiced to ensure that their students are empowered to navigate what are sometimes hostile academic environments.

A comparative study of the differences in mentorship between Latinas and Latinos in doctoral programs could also provide a great deal of insight into this field. This research could answer such questions as how does gender impact how future academics are groomed for the professorate? As was discussed in this study, women often have to contend with the choices around whether they can have a family and pursue the professorate in Research Intensive Institutions. A study examining how Latina/o men and women contend with these types of choices and gendered expectations would be valuable in the field. While some research has been done on this topic with faculty members, this research is yet to be developed examining the experiences of doctoral students.

In reality, there is a great deal of research that needs to be developed in order to gain more insight on the experiences of underrepresented students within doctoral education. As emerging research is identifying the lack of racial minorities within faculty positions across higher education, it is important to understand the many dynamics that may be contributing to this issue. By giving voice to Latinas and their experiences within the academy, we begin to uncover some of the underlying issues impacting them in the academy. In providing a platform for these voices, this research aims to make higher education a bit more accessible for Latinas.

University of California, Los Angeles

The Post-Doctoral Career Trajectories of Latina Social Science Ph.D.s

Yamissette Westerband, M.A., M.S.W, from the Gender Studies Department, under the faculty sponsorship of Dr. Daniel Solorzano at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) are conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a Latina/Chicana woman currently or formerly enrolled in a doctoral program. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

This study will provide greater insight into the experiences of Latinas/Chicanas within the academy, specifically within doctoral programs in research intensive institutions. This research will explore how the doctoral socialization process is experienced by Latinas/Chicanas, as well as their post-doctoral career choices.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Complete a brief demographic survey
- Participate in one to two 60 minute in-person interviews
- The interviews will be audio-recorded
- Provide any information you wish to add or clarify post-interview via e-mail communication

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about 1 to 3 hours.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

- There are no potential risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You may benefit from the study in the long-term impact of this research and the greater awareness this research will provide regarding the experiences of Latinas/Chicanas in doctoral programs.

The results of the research may provide a greater understanding of how Latinas/Chicanas experience the Ph.D. education and socialization process, it will add to the emerging literature in this field, and may be utilized to impact policies that aim to diversify the academy.

What other choices do I have if I choose not to participate?

You are not required to participate, and may choose to terminate participation in this study at any time.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of securing all documents that contain identifiable information. Any recordings and documents that have identifiable information will be kept in a locked cabinet that only the principal investigator will be able to access. Participation in this study will be kept confidential. You have the right to review, edit or erase the research tapes of your participation in whole or in part.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
  If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:

  Yamissette Westerband, the Principal Investigator, at yamiwest@ucla.edu.

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program

  11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694

  Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant	

Signature of Participant	Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent	Contact Number

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Tell me a bit about your background:

1) Where are you from originally?

2) What was school like for you growing up? Did you plan to attend college when you were younger?

3) Tell me about your adult life before attending your Ph.D. program. Did you go directly to graduate school after undergraduate school? What is your professional/ academic background?

GRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Tell me a bit about your doctoral experience:

1) What motivated you to attend a Ph.D. program? What were your goals in attending a Ph.D. program? Did you have long term goals of being a professor and being in the academy?

2) How did you choose your Ph.D. program?

3) How much did you know about the Ph.D. process before entering your program?

4) Tell me about your graduate school experience so far. What has graduate school been like for you?

GRADUATE MENTORSHIP

Tell me about your mentorship experiences during the Ph.D.:

1) Have you found supportive mentors in your graduate program? What does supportive mentoring look like to you, how have they been supportive?

3) Have you had mentorship and support in publishing work, conducting research, attending conferences, teaching, making connections with faculty? Can you describe the kind of training or mentorship you've received around some of these opportunities?

4) Have you found role models in your program whom you admire and wish to emulate? What are some of the qualities you find admirable in this person?

POST-DOCTORAL ASPIRATIONS

Tell me about your goals/plans after completing your Ph.D.:

1) Do you see yourself as an academic/scholar in the future?

2) If you're planning to pursue the professorate, what kind of institution would you ideally like to see yourself in (e.g. Research institution, state school, community college, private college, Ivy League, etc)?

3) As a doctoral student, have you considered career paths other than the professorate? If so, which ones?

4) Do you feel you have gained marketable skills in pursuing the Ph.D.? Do you feel you have a variety of career options post-Ph.D.?

5) Do you feel you've received guidance regarding career choices post-Ph.D.? If so, what kind of guidance or mentorship have you received?

BEING ON THE "JOB MARKET"

If you've been or are currently on the "job market", tell me a bit about your experience:

1) What has it been like to be on the "job market"?

2) What kinds of employment/ positions have you searched for and applied for? Have you gone on interviews and job talks? What have those experiences been like?

7) Did you feel prepared to be on the job market? Did you feel you had the tools and skills to apply successfully to employment positions?

APPENDIX C: SCREENING CONSENT SCRIPT

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

Re-Imagined Dreams:

The Post-Doctoral Career Trajectories of Latina Social Science Ph.D.'s

Thank you for contacting me regarding "Re-Imagined Dreams: The Post-Doctoral Career Trajectories of Latina Social Science Ph.D.'s". 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. My research explores the doctoral socialization process for Latinas/Chicanas in research institutions, and their post-Ph.D. career goals and choices.

Would you like to continue with the screening? The screening will take about 10 minutes. I will ask you about your pre-Ph.D. career goals, the type of academic institution you are (or recently have) obtaining your Ph.D. from, other motivations for entering your Ph.D. program, etc. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or are uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. Your participation in the screening is voluntary.

Your answers will be confidential. No one will know your answers except for the principal investigator.

(If you do not qualify for the study: the answers will be destroyed to protect confidentiality. Alternately, if you do qualify for the research, decide to participate, and sign the research informed consent form, the answers will be kept with the research record in a secure, locked cabinet only accessed by the principal investigator).

SCREENING QUESTIONS:

1) NAME OF INSTITUTION AND ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT WHERE YOU ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED:

2) YEARS IN YOUR PH.D. PROGRAM:

3) ADVANCED TO CANDIDACY (PH.D. CANDIDATE)? Y or N.

IF YES, DATE OF ADVANCEMENT:

4) I ENTERED MY PH.D. PROGRAM WITH THE PROFESSIONAL GOAL OF PURSUING A CAREER AS A PROFESSOR. Y or N

5) I ENTERED MY PH.D. PROGRAM WITH THE PROFESSIONAL GOAL OF TEACHING AT A RESEARCH INTENSIVE INSTITUTION. Y or N

6) PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS WHEN YOU DECIDED TO PURSUE A PH.D.:

7) PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY OTHER REASONS/MOTIVATION FOR ENTERING A PH.D. PROGRAM:

Thank you for answering the screening questions.

Do you have any questions about the screening or the research? If you have questions about the research screening, you may call me at 310-529-9662 and I will answer your questions.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122.

Thank you again for your willingness to answer my questions.

Principal Investigator: Yamissette M. Westerband, M.A., M.S.W.
Ph.D. Candidate, Gender Studies Department
University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Achor, S., & Morales, A. (1990). Chicanas holding doctoral degrees: Social reproduction and cultural ecological approaches. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 21(3), 269-287.*

Anzaldùa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza.* San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.

Bañuelos, L. E. (2006). Here They Go Again With The Race Stuff: Chicana Negotiations of the Graduate Experience. *Chicana / Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Benishek, L. , Bieschke, K. , Park, J. , & Slattery, S. (2004). A multicultural feminist model of mentoring. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *32*, 428-442.

Bernal, D. D., & Villalpando, O. (2002). An Apartheid of Knowledge in Academia: The Struggle Over the "Legitimate" Knowledge of Faculty of Color. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 35*(2), 169-180.

Burciaga, R. (2007). Chicana Ph.D. students living Nepantla, education and aspirations beyond the doctorate. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles.

Campbell, T. A., & Campbell, D. E. (2007). Outcomes of mentoring at-risk college students: gender and ethnic matching effects. *Mentoring & Tutoring*,*15*(2), 135-148.

Chesney-Lind, M. , Okamoto, S. , & Irwin, K. (2006). Thoughts on feminist mentoring: Experiences of faculty members from two generations in the academy. *Critical Criminology*, *14*(1), 1-21.

Clance, P. R. & S. A. Imes. 1978. 'The impostor phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention'. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice 15: 241–247

Clark, B.R. (1960). The "Cooling-Out" Function in Higher Education. *The American Journal of Sociology, 65*(6), 569-576.

Clark, B. R. (1980). The "Cooling-Out" Function Revisited. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 32,* 15-21.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241-1299.

Cuadraz, G. H. (1993). *Meritocracy (un)challenged: The making of a Chicano and Chicana professoriate and professional class.* Unpublished Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley.

Cruz, C. (2008). Notes on immigration, youth, and ethnographic silence. *Theory into Practice*, *47*(1), 67-73.

Cuadraz, G. H., & Pierce, J. L. (1994). From Scholarship Girls to Scholarship Women: Surviving the Contradictions of Class and Race in Academe. *Explorations in Ethnic Studies: Race, Class, and Gender, 17*(1), 21-44.

Delgado Bernal, D. (1998). Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research. *Harvard Educational Review, 68*(4), 555-579.

DeVault, M. (1996). Talking back to sociology: Distinctive contributions of feminist methodology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *22*(1), 29-50.

Elenes, C. A. (2001). Transformando Fronteras: Chicana Feminist Transformative Pedagogies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 14*(5), 689-702.

Espinoza, R. (2001). The good daughter dilemma: Latinas managing family and school Demands. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 9*(4), 317-330.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum Publishing.

Gandara, P. (1982). Passing through the eye of the needle: high-achieving Chicanas. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 4*(2), 167-179.

Gandara, P. (1995). *Over the ivy walls: The educational mobility of low-income Chicanos.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Goffman, E. (1952). On Cooling the Mark Out: Some Aspects of Adaptation to Failure. *Psychiatry, 15*, 451-463.

Golde, C. M., & Dore, T. M. (2001). *At cross purposes: What the experiences of doctoral students reveal about doctoral education.* Philadelphia: The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Gonzalez, J. (2006). Academic Socialization Experiences of Latina Doctoral Students: A Qualitative Understanding of Support Systems That Aid and Challenges That Hinder the Process. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 5*(4), 347-365.

Gorelick, S. (1991). Contradictions of feminist methodology. *Gender and Society*, *5*(4), 459-477.

Herideen, P.E. (1998). *Policy, pedagogy, and social inequality: community college student realities in post-industrial America*. Westport, Conn: Bergin & Garvey.

Hochschild, A. (1989). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. New York: Viking Penguin.

Mahmood, S. (2005). *Politics of piety: the Islamic revival and the feminist subject.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Modeling Mentoring Across Race/ethnicity and Gender: Practices to Cultivate the Next Generation of Diverse Faculty. (2015). Sterling, Virginia: Stylus

Montoya, M. (1994). Màscaras, Trenzas, y Greñas: Un/masking the Self While Un/braiding Latina Stories and Legal Discourse. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: the Cutting Edge* (Second ed., pp.514-524). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

R.V. Padilla & R. Chavez (Eds.), *The leaning ivory tower: Latino professors in American universities.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Rivas, M., Perez, J., Alvarez, C. & Solorzano, D. (2007). Latina/o Transfer Students: Understanding the Critical Role of the Transfer Process in California's Postsecondary Institutions. *UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Research Report, 9.*

Solorzano, D. (1998). Critical Race Theory, Race and Gender Microaggressions, and the Experience of Chicana and Chicano Scholars. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 121-136.

Solorzano, D. & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining Transformational Resistance Through a Critical Race and LatCrit Theory Framework: Chicana and Chicano Students in an Urban Context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308-342.

Solorzano, D., & Yosso, T.J. (2000). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Chicana and Chicano Education. *Charting Terrains of Chicana(0)/ Latina(0) Education,* Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton, Inc.

Solorzano, D., & Yosso, T.J. (2001). Critical Race and LatCrit Theory and Method: Counter-storytelling, Chicana and Chicano Graduate School Experiences. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 14*(4), 471-495.

Solorzano, D., & Yosso, T.J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 23-44.

Solorzano, D., & Villalpando, O. (1998). Critical race theory, marginality, and the experience of students of color in higher education. In C. Torres & T. Mitchell (Eds.), *Sociology of education: Emerging perspectives* (pp.211-224). New York: State University of New York Press, Albany.

The Latina Feminist Group. (2001). *Telling to live: Latina feminist testimonios.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Turner, C.S. (2002). Women of Color in Academe: Living with Multiple Marginality. *Journal of Higher Education, 73*(1): 74-93.

Turner, C. S. V. (2015). *Modeling mentoring across race/ethnicity and gender: Practices to cultivate the next generation of diverse faculty*.

Watford, T., Rivas, M.A., Burciaga, R., & Solorzano, D. (2006). Latinas and the doctorate : The "status" of attainment and experiences from the margin. In J. Castellanos, & A. Gloria (Eds.), in *Abriendo caminos: The Latina/o pathway to the Ph. D*. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison Press.

Watford, T. (2007). *Looking Beyond Equal Representation: Perspectives of Gender Equity from the New Majority in Doctoral Education*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California Los Angeles.

Wilde, J. , & Schau, C. (1991). Mentoring in graduate schools of education: Mentees' perceptions. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *59*(2), 165-179.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.

Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/chicano educational pipeline*. New York: Routledge.

Yosso, T. J., Smith. W.A., Ceja. M., and Solorzano, D.G. (2010). Critical Race Theory, Racial Microaggressions, and Campus Racial Climate for Latina/o Undergraduates." *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(4), 659-690.