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## Beyond Affirmative Action: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Latinas in Academia

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# Beyond Affirmative Action

# An Inquiry into the Experiences of Latinas in Academia

*Martha Montero-Sieburth, Ed.D.*

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*This article presents a Latina professional's observations of the world of meanings and circumstances that Latina academicians and researchers face in higher education. While they are not represented as a definitive study, because research on underrepresented faculty is sparse and inconclusive owing to the small numbers, they are nonetheless exploratory and critical, rooted in the author's and other Latinas' exposure to academic contexts, forums, and institutes, the scant literature on Latina academicians, and the experiences and reflections of fifteen professional Latinas in higher education. The academic structural obstacles that have constrained the advancement of these women in their professionalization are documented as a means to identify the types of reform policies and research needed in higher education.*

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This article is essentially a series of observations that I, a Latina professional, have made of the world of meanings and circumstances which Latina academicians and researchers face in higher education.<sup>1</sup> My comments, which are first steps toward a form of inquiry and documentation that identifies the processes and circumstances experienced by Latinas in academia, have implications for the types of public policies required to go beyond the effects of affirmative action programs and diversity commitments. I attempt to understand the individual and interpersonal issues that Latinas share about academia and the ways in which institutions respond to their presence and advancement.

While my observations are general ones, I do not offer them as a definitive study because research on underrepresented faculty is sparse and inconclusive owing to small numbers. Far from being speculative, the observations are exploratory and critical, rooted in my and other Latinas' exposure to academic contexts, forums, and institutes, the scant literature on Latina academicians, and the experiences and reflections of a diverse group of fifteen professional Latinas in higher education with whom I have maintained a close network for more than fifteen years.

The heritage of these women, who range in age from thirty-two to fifty-five, consists of two Mexican, five Chicana, five Puerto Rican, one Argentine, one Honduran, and one Costa Rican. Of the seven who are married, four are in second marriages and have extended families; three are either single or never married and five are divorced; two of them are single parents.

More than two-thirds of them were born in the United States, and the rest immigrated to this country in the past ten to fifteen years. All are bilingual in varying degrees, from

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*“Often enough, the experiences of Latinas involve a conflict between the meaning that mainstream academic culture foists upon them and the world view — the social assumptions and obligations that they have inherited as part of their indigenous cultures and traditions. Their role then becomes, at best, that of mediator between two or more worlds of value and meaning. It is a role confounded by incompatible or divergent expectations. A sensitivity to the subjective conflicts that this engenders is therefore vital to a proper understanding of the reasons for underrepresentation.”*

*— Martha Montero-Sieburth*

total speaking and writing fluency in Spanish to passive speaking and writing knowledge of Spanish. Four are dominant English speakers, but they revert to Spanish words if the occasion requires. All have doctorates, Ph.D.'s or Ed.D.'s, with additional coursework and postdoctoral experience. They are spread geographically between the eastern and western coasts of the United States, hold positions ranging from administrative to university teaching and research in private and public institutions of higher learning, and have been at their current positions from three to twelve years.

Of the fifteen, five have tenure, two are at the full professor level, three at the associate professor level, two at the assistant professor level, and three are research associates. Two are top administrators — one is a director of a research think tank, the other a director of bilingual education — and two are consultants — one in preschool education, the other in international education. Two have had Ivy League experience in a tenure (bilingual education) and nontenure (teaching and learning) track. Only one continues at an Ivy League.

The network between these women developed informally as they met at diverse meetings, conferences, and forums. It was natural for them to attend those sessions which dealt with Latino issues and to uncover their common interests. In several instances, a few have worked together on research projects, which has galvanized their relationship. At other times, they have collaborated on presentations and hence have come to understand each other's agenda. Thus, these women have self-selected themselves, as is to be expected given their limited numbers. In that sense, they constitute part of the limited pool of Latina scholars.

While they do not meet among themselves regularly, nor as a group, they do gravitate to one another, particularly at annual conferences, women's studies groups, institutes, and forums. They keep in touch through diverse networks, including bilingual working groups, significant interest groups of their professional organizations, collaborative research grants, and the Internet. Several have helped each other to complete their doctorates, writing letters of recommendation and providing support during promotion and tenure. Yet, as in many academic relationships, they experience a great deal of transition and mobility within their positions.

Despite their experiences, about which they have engaged in dialogues, communicated, and exchanged letters with me, several common themes and elements have emerged from their engagement. While some of the issues may seem peculiar, there is a degree of consensus on the themes I have culled from written and oral communications that continue to surface as part of their dialogue.

I should point out that the identification of the common themes and elements does not represent general cultural norms for these Latinas, but rather indicators of shared experiences within academia which have some commonalities. Such identification does not purport to depict these women's social histories, political formation, or demographic experiences as a single group, since this would be an inaccurate and unfair generalization. Yet, given the lack of formulated research on Latina academicians and the fact that they are so few, inquiry about the variety and quality of their experiences is essential. Therefore, I make a strong case for identifying individual and structural common experiences among Latina scholars as a means to portray their realities.

From these observations the analysis focuses on the phenomenon of underrepresentation from personal, research, and institutional perspectives. Within the general personal issues are sociocultural differences, mainstream workplace meanings, professionaliza-

tion processes, and more important, the impact of institutional structures on Latinas. Multiple factors such as research limitations, research biases, language domains, interpersonal attitudes, social obligations, and lack of mentoring, as well as intragroup expectations, are discussed as reasons why the experiences of Latinas have fared poorly in finding a voice in the academic and research literature on underrepresented communities. The differences between mainstream and Latina academicians, particularly in terms of social, cultural, gender, and political issues, are identified. From an institutional perspective, manifestations of covert racism and discrimination in terms of prevalent academic practices are identified, as well as the structural obstacles that impede the advancement of Latinas in their professionalization.

The world of Latina academicians and the social construction of their realities is presented in terms of the acknowledgment, recognition, and opposition they encounter, not only from mainstream academicians, but also from their Latina/Latino counterparts in various contexts. In addition, the impact that Latina feminist scholarship and research currently has in redefining Latinas' own paradigms is described for its realignment of women's studies to the more politically inclined analysis of Chicana/Puerto Rican feminism. Finally, I identify a series of public policy implications for higher education, including the need to incorporate ethnographic research studies with institutional analysis as well as the development of new paradigms, educational infrastructure, community outreach and participation, and assessment criteria.

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### **The Underrepresentation of Latinos and Latinas in Higher Education**

That Latinas are severely underrepresented in higher education, research, and teaching is an established fact.<sup>2</sup> According to Linda Johnsruud and Christine Des Jarlais, who cite the National Center for Education Statistics of 1991, "Of the 489,000 full-time instructional faculty in 1987, 89.5 percent were white, 3.2 percent were black, 2.3 percent were Hispanic, 4.2 percent were Asian, and 0.7 percent were American Indians."<sup>3</sup> Of these, the percentage of all faculty members who are Latina professors is 0.2 percent, compared with 0.9 percent for Latino professors, 0.4 percent for Latina associate professors compared with 1.4 percent for Latinos, 0.6 percent for Latina assistant professors compared with 1.2 percent for Latinos, and 0.9 percent for Latina instructors and lecturers compared with 1.4 percent for Latinos.<sup>4</sup>

Underrepresented faculty numbers have kept pace neither with the growing population rates nor with the burgeoning numbers of underrepresented students entering higher education.<sup>5</sup> They still comprise only 12 percent of the total faculty numbers, in contrast to their 20 percent population rate.<sup>6</sup> Paradoxically, they are most underrepresented in private elite institutions and in two year-colleges, which enroll the highest concentration of underrepresented students whose access to higher education is assumed to be the lowest.<sup>7</sup> Latinos tend to be heavily concentrated in ethnic studies such as Chicano or Puerto Rican studies programs, Spanish departments and bilingual education, or in isolated academic programs, where they are represented by single numbers.

While placements in tenure-track positions appear to implement the mandates and guidelines of affirmative action policies, they do little to make the presence of Latinos in higher education visible and to create "pipeline" opportunities for Latino students. In fact, says Michael Olivas:

Characterizing the problem of minority underenrollment at any level as a "pool problem" suggests a supply shortage, or at best, a failure to cast one's line in the right fishing hole. . . . The data presented . . . make powerful claims that we produce too few qualified minority graduates to stock our faculties. The pipeline and ladder metaphors reinforce this view of the problem, suggesting that it is simply a delivery glitch, or that faculties would hire us if only they used better conveyances. After all, neither pipelines nor ladders produce anything of value; they only carry or convey products.<sup>8</sup>

Hisauro Garza and Elizabeth Cohen qualify that "academia seems not to hire qualified minority professors for whatever positions are available, but mainly to teach the necessary race relations or sociology of Chicanos or Blacks, etc."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Latinos are still the least represented in the U.S. professoriat for all underrepresented groups and have the lowest participation rate in graduate education and in the pool of earned doctorates.<sup>10</sup> Latino faculty are more commonly found in lower-regarded universities, state colleges, and two-year colleges than in prestigious institutions such as Harvard, Stanford, Berkeley, and Columbia, even though 95.9 percent of doctorates for Latinos are from such prestigious universities and "three out of four (71.4 percent) of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans who were untenured were located in high prestige universities" in Garza's 1987 survey.<sup>11</sup>

While the implications of underrepresentation of Latinos and Latinas at prestigious Ivy League institutions may not appear to be significant because "the Ivy League's undergraduates make up less than one percent of the enrollment in the nation's four-year colleges, that one percent is virtually the nation's ruling class."<sup>12</sup> With such concentration of power and decision making at Ivy Leagues, the presence of Latino faculty as role models in these institutions becomes compelling. Yet from the small numbers of tenure-track Latino faculty to be found within them, in relation to total faculty, student populations, and, particularly, Latino students, the commitment reflected by these institutions to diversify their faculty and comply with affirmative action goals is questionable.

Irene Middleman Thomas reports that there are currently 13 Latinos in the 600 tenure-track faculty and 571 Latino students out of 8,752 at Harvard University; at Cornell, there are 20 Latinos in the 1,581 total faculty and 730 Latino students out of 13,178 students; at Yale University, there are 20 Latino faculty out of 1,445 on tenure track with 292 Latino students in a student population of 5,217.<sup>13</sup> At these prestigious institutions, Garza's survey for 1987 indicated that 67.1 percent reported being the only Latino in the department, while 32.9 percent reported being the only Latino in the department at lower-prestige institutions.<sup>14</sup>

Between 1989 and 1990, Latinos earned 783 doctorates, only 2 percent of the total 37,980 awarded.<sup>15</sup> The profile of Latino and African-American doctoral recipients indicates that they tend to be older than their Asian and white counterparts, take somewhat longer to complete their degrees, and more frequently go into teaching.<sup>16</sup> Latinos tend to receive their doctorates primarily in education and secondarily in social sciences and the humanities. Yet studies of Latino doctorates indicate that they tend to "have the next to the lowest participation rate as college faculty."<sup>17</sup> In fact, according to Garza and Cohen, "only 13 percent of Latinos with doctorates in education obtain college faculty employment compared to 30 in math and natural sciences, 21 percent in psychology and social sciences, 29 percent in language, literature, arts and humanities, and 7 percent in engineering. Only one out of every eight Latino education doctorates actually go into college

or university teaching."<sup>18</sup> Thus, according to Garza and Cohen, doctorates in education are not likely to translate into university and teaching positions.<sup>19</sup>

The case for female faculty, particularly Latinas, is even more dismal. Over the past decade, the number of doctorates earned by women increased by 25 percent, but only 5 percent of these were earned by members of racial or ethnic minorities.<sup>20</sup> While the pool of doctorates (Ph.D.'s and Ed.D.'s) for underrepresented women has grown, there has not been much progress in terms of faculty appointments and tenure.<sup>21</sup> Of the 4,069 full-time Latina faculty members in 1991, only 2.3 percent were tenured compared with 88.2 percent for white female faculty.<sup>22</sup>

Such figures as are available speak of the paucity of the achievements of Latinos in response to the challenge posed by these numbers and the needs of the community.<sup>23</sup> These facts call for serious inquiry and explanation.

### **Categories of Latina Underrepresentation**

While factors such as individual persistence, motivation, financial circumstances, and so forth, may explain given cases of obstructed achievement for Latinas, the phenomenon of underrepresentation calls for a deeper analysis of the problem. Broadly speaking, at least four categories of underrepresentation of Latinas in higher education have to be considered: (1) perceived sociocultural differences, (2) mainstream workplace meanings, (3) the professionalization of Latinas, and (4) institutional factors.

How Latinas perceive and interpret the situation in which they are placed when they embark on educational endeavors in American mainstream contexts is one of the most important determinants of their chances of success and prominence in their respective fields. For Latinas, entry into the world of academia is fraught with their perceived beliefs of the expectations and demands they will encounter in higher education. At the same time, there is also the institutional ethos they confront, which also reflects a set of beliefs regarding Latinas and their status vis-à-vis other ethnic groups.

For many Latinas, the vehicle for their entry and acceptance into higher education has been served by the existence of affirmative action programs that were put into practice in higher education during the 1970s. In fact, sex discrimination in federally financed employment was actively applied for the first time in higher education through the executive order.<sup>24</sup> Such programs have aimed at increasing opportunities for women to enter academia while ensuring equity in competition for faculty positions by developing goals that demonstrate the access, retention, and promotion of women and underrepresented groups. Such programs promised restitution for past discriminatory practices while maintaining a balance between the sexes. Specific groups such as Latinos, African-Americans, Asians, and Native Americans have been targeted as "protected groups" requiring preferential treatment.

However well intended these programs have been, affirmative action policies in their implementation of goals have been hampered by a series of complexities that range from identifying available women and underrepresented group members to institution-based, rather than department-based hiring goals. In some institutions, affirmative action policies have been translated to the use of quotas based on race and gender as remedies; thus, when Latinas gain entry or are hired in higher education, suspicion about the reasons for their being there are raised as a form of tokenism or as examples of reverse discrimination.

Nowhere has this reaction been more apparent than in the hiring of Latinas as faculty or administrators where the institution has manipulated their representation under the "two-fer or three-fer notions." That is, faculty or administrators are hired under the assumption that they are filling both an underrepresented and a female slot, particularly as a woman of color.<sup>25</sup> In this manner, the institution can consider that it has in fact fulfilled several quotas that meet the criteria of affirmative action policies.

Yet by more indicators — the prevailing hiring practices, career path promotions, and the number of available tenured academic slots for Latinas — such an assumption is not supported. According to Marian Chamberlain, "Neither information on the pool of eligibles nor data on faculty composition indicate disproportionate gains by minority women."<sup>26</sup> In point of fact, the research of Johnsrud and Des Jarlais points out that "women and [underrepresented] faculty tend to be promoted and tenured more slowly than white male faculty and are more likely to leave an institution before gaining tenure."<sup>27</sup>

The study of Shirley Achor and Aida Morales of one hundred Chicanas who earned their doctorates despite overt and covert discrimination indicates that the completion of their degrees was in large part due to expected personal and institutional belief patterns held and not accepting the norms.<sup>28</sup> In this study, the reactions of Chicanas to discrimination were not based on intimidation but on resistance, challenge, and contestation of the negative messages for failure. As Achor and Morales express it: "Negative messages casting doubts on the abilities of persons of their ethnicity and gender to succeed served not as an impediment, but as an impetus to prove the message wrong."<sup>29</sup> Such resistance, termed "resistance with accommodation" by Achor and Morales, implies a rejection of the existing power relationships within the confines of the institutionally approved means to gain educational advancement.

Indeed, the impact of factors such as the cultural universe of Latinos — and of the role of gender — and of power relations is so important that it is surprising that it has received so little attention in the literature on the subject in academic settings.<sup>30</sup> Equally important is the meaning that mainstream society attaches to the work and presence of the Latino educator.<sup>31</sup> This meaning — how mainstream authorities in education perceive the Latina's being and role, together with the expectations and demands that follow from this perception — powerfully affect the Latina's image of her role and purpose.

Often enough, the experiences of Latinas involve a conflict between the meaning that mainstream academic culture foists upon them and the world view — the social assumptions and obligations that they have inherited as part of their indigenous cultures and traditions. Their role then becomes, at best, that of mediator between two or more worlds of value and meaning. It is a role confounded by incompatible or divergent expectations. A sensitivity to the subjective conflicts that this engenders is therefore vital to a proper understanding of the reasons for underrepresentation.

To become professional, "having an assured competence in a particular field or occupation" is required.<sup>32</sup> Such acquisition does not readily become available with the academic territory for Latinas.<sup>33</sup> A small but growing research literature indicates that underrepresented faculty members experience academia quite differently from their nonunderrepresented counterparts.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the rites of passage as experienced by Latinos, and in particular Latinas, is also uniquely different.<sup>35</sup>

On the one hand, socialization into a professional academic role for Latinas requires, among other things, being guided into the role and responsibilities of academician within the institution, that is, of being a scholar and researcher who is supported in both work



and teaching by colleagues of the academy. It requires developing personal relationships through peer coaching and mentoring and building networks that will support one's work. It also requires developing the political knowledge of how institutions function and how senior faculty can be advocates for one's advancement.

On the other hand, at the individual level the advancement of the professional self means knowing how the mainstream career track can operate for oneself — the ways in which the rules and regulations can be accessed and understood and how one negotiates them while maintaining connections to one's own culture. Ofelia Miramontes describes such a process:

In higher education, we enter an environment that heightens the focus on the individual. The currency is personalized to the individual and his/her intellect. Writing, introspection and reflection are most important, and work focuses specifically on handling context-reduced abstractions. The academic requirements of reflection and mental activity seem antithetical to the community action model we learned in our early development. The distance between reflection and action is compounded by the awareness of the acute sociopolitical needs of the Hispanic community.<sup>36</sup>

To these categories of factors — the Latina's reality and the reality as conceived by mainstream academics and the socialization of the personal and professional persona — must be added a fourth category: the institutional factors affecting access, retention, job security, and career advancement. Institutional realities of this kind are affected by, and in turn affect and influence, the meanings and perceptions that are projected upon Latinas and their careers in the field of education. Together they constitute the realm of experience in which such a woman finds herself placed for better or for worse.

### **Obstructions within Academic and Research Settings**

Since Theresa Herrera Escobedo's article "Are Hispanic Women in Higher Education the Nonexistent Minority?" appeared in *Educational Researcher* in 1980, attempts at examining this significant yet neglected topic have spuriously appeared in academic journals, at educational and women's conferences, as part of women's studies programs, or as state-of-the-art reports.<sup>37</sup>

Latinas have been represented in the research within the aggregate statistics of other "underrepresented" groups or as part of an inclusive category used to explain all Latino subgroups.<sup>38</sup> Such representation does justice neither to the uniqueness of the individual nor the shared experiences of Latinas within their own subgroup. More obscuring has been the identification of Latinas solely within the confines of affirmative action programs. When they are represented as quotas within an institution, their professional contributions beyond their ethnic identification may likely be obscured.

The research about Latinas in education is also not free of problems. Among the reasons cited for the dearth of usable research data on the experiences of Latinas, Adelaida Del Castillo, Jeanie Frederickson, Teresa McKenna, and Flora Ida Ortiz list the following: (1) Research on descriptions or analysis of the educational reality of Latinas in its complexity or how the educational experiences of Latinas and Latinos differ is limited from either a gender or general perspective. (2) Research for Latinos in education has been conceptualized from a "cultural deficiency model" ascribing negative expectations, attitudes, values, and behaviors to Latinos as a single group. Thus explanations of failure for Latinos are stereotypically defined as being endemic of personal or family structures.

(3) Research that represents Latinas and Latinos in general as a monolithic group from which findings are generalized to all ethnic subgroups or socioeconomic levels is inaccurate and invalid. (4) More important is the lack of appropriate conceptual models that direct and interpret research efforts on the educational experiences of Latinas.<sup>39</sup>

To these research problems focusing on the disparity of women in academia is added the dilemma of focus identified by Johnsrud and Des Jarlais in terms of the structural analysis of the academy and what it must do to retain women, particularly underrepresented women, and individual or interpersonal roles, and what women, especially underrepresented women, must do to survive.<sup>40</sup> Again because the research on underrepresented faculty is so sparse, accurate conclusions cannot be made of Latinas as a whole on the one hand and, on the other, “the need to provide anonymity for respondents makes it very difficult to partition the data in meaningful ways (i.e., by ethnic or racial group, sex, rank, or discipline).”<sup>41</sup>

One of the principal reasons for the lopsided, indeed dogmatic, bias among researchers in the field of education favoring conventional social science as “science” is its grounding in Euro-centered and positivist paradigms. In the viewpoint resulting from this bias, the participant’s experience is treated as of no more than anecdotal value (and hence as a species of folklore) if it does not fall within the traditionally accepted Newtonian or Bayesian paradigms.<sup>42</sup> A case in point is the following vignette:

At a conference on Minority Women’s Issues, a mainstream researcher comments during her presentation that the Latinas in the survey failed to fill in the portion of the questionnaire that had the word “race.” She remarks that these women obviously didn’t know what race they belonged to! To clarify issues, I point out that for Chicanas/ Mexican-Americans, the concept of race refers to “la raza” — which is an inclusive cultural and social notion expressing a sense of nationhood or peoplehood for all indigenous peoples of the Americas. Thus for these women, the biological definition of race may not be uppermost in their minds. Yet the researcher argues that they should know from living in the United States how to answer a questionnaire with such terms by now.<sup>43</sup>

It is clear from this example that the implicit knowledge of the meaning of race by Chicanas and Mexican-Americans is viewed as being symbolically too abstract to be understood or even accepted in this context where mainstream women report on Latinas. Yet when Latinas attempt to report on their own analysis, the following may occur, as was the case for a Latina faculty member at an eastern university: “If I say something about the Latino family, I am viewed as being overly concerned with my Latino origins, but if my white middle-class colleague makes a generalization regarding machismo and Latino families, it is taken to be a fact.”<sup>44</sup>

Within the research domain, such explanation does not carry the same explanatory power as that proposed by the mainstream researcher. More often, instances such as the one cited above are discounted as “subjective” and unscientific and, therefore, an unreliable means to knowledge and inference. Statements of experience, of one’s ethos or environment, are admitted to the status neither of theory nor of empirical finding. What is needed is nothing short of an epistemological shift — a shift, that is, in the very assumptions about what constitutes knowledge. In the absence of such a shift, even well-recognized and acclaimed contributions of Latina educators will be accorded only partial acceptance as “personal or literary accounts.”<sup>45</sup>

A Latina in an academic and educational research setting is especially vulnerable to being ignored on this ground because her experience goes against the grain of received wisdom, and her voice is therefore new and tentative.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting, in this context, to find that the self-expressions of Latinas are made less of at academic forums and seminars, not only by men but also by other women, as random and unsystematic — in short, as “unscientific.”

One of the most common arenas where the self-expressions of Latinas are negated is the process of having proposals reviewed and accepted by peers for upcoming conferences. For most of the Latina researchers and faculty with whom I have maintained contact, the process has been a discouraging experience at best. These researchers have had to ensure that the message of their work was not only methodologically clear, but also “scientifically sound,” while suppressing findings that would be used to pigeonhole all Latinas.

Remarks collected from several of the Latinas in these observations who have submitted proposal abstracts follow. In the case of a senior Puerto Rican Latina faculty member, the comments were: “Potentially good, but vague. If accepted, we may want to request a written paper in advance for others in session to read. Also, if not received, cancel session.” In another case of a Puerto Rican junior faculty member who is a diversity trainer, the comments were: “Entirely appropriate topic for a meeting on ‘diversity,’ however the database is impressionistic, it may be a very valuable personal essay, but it does not appear to be a systematic study.” In yet another case, that of a Mexican-American junior faculty who has written a reflective essay derived from a survey, the comments were:

Reflections, observations, and histories of Latinas in the field of education may be engaging, but Div. X should present objective data on a topic of this sort. Good idea, but needs hard data more than reflections, observations and interviews. The topic is apt, but the qualitative literature may not be as objective as surveying colleges by objective questions.

Such comments hardly help the recipients know how to readdress their proposals so as to resubmit them in the future. When a proposal is finally accepted and is placed by the chair within an area to appear in the program, where the paper finally ends up is critical. For example, in several of these Latinas’ experiences, it was not uncommon to find their papers within panels that had little to do with the subject. For instance one of the Puerto Rican women who is a teacher educator commented: “I sent in a proposal on teachers’ knowledge, expecting it to be reviewed and placed within a panel dealing with teachers’ epistemologies, only to find myself defending my study against a panel of cognitive psychologists interested in analysis of items for testing.”<sup>47</sup>

This same obstruction also prevails when one attempts to have her proposal fit “all white female conferences.” It is paradoxical to observe women finding fault with fellow-women for failing to be scientific or “rational,” when one remembers that these are precisely the epistemological labels with which male academics have tended to brand their female counterparts, denying them participation. Several of the Latinas from whom my observations are derived stated that some of the harshest critics of their work were other women, mostly those in authoritative positions, whether mainstream or other women of color.<sup>48</sup>

When women of color had authority over other women of color and were easily perceived as being “a visible minority — darker skin color,” Latinas of lighter skin color found themselves being ignored and outranked for their contributions even though they shared the same nomenclature of “underrepresented.”<sup>49</sup>

One Puerto Rican researcher who expected to develop a curriculum that identified aspects of Puerto Rican culture which affected early childhood development was told by her supervisor that “Latinos were out, because the emphasis was on African-American children for the reports. And as long as she directed the project, there would be no exploration of Latinos and their educational issues.” The Latina researcher resigned from her job after all her projects with a Latino focus were rejected by her supervisor, an African-American woman.

The experiential world of Latina academicians must be taken as the mainstay of any attempt to understand their situation. This experience entails factors intimate to one’s identity, such as language and interpersonal social relationships. Contradictory understandings of these factors in the milieu in question — mainstream academic, Latino, and underrepresented groups — lead to stresses and strains in the Latina academician seeking to cope with the system.

Issues of language are often understood literally, that is, in terms of Spanish versus English. But the problem extends to the deeper level of modes of thinking. In conventional academics, the modes of thought are patterned after a technical operations model. They involve a notion of “rationality” that excludes, or at least minimizes, passion and experiential insights. This bias is reflected in the use of academic jargon.

One of the reasons Latinas find it difficult to relate to academic language, which is highly stylized and artificial, is that their own modes of thinking and expression are adverse to the strict separation between cognition and passion, the personal and the impersonal, and the social and the unsocial. Even for mainstream faculty and researchers, the academic and the personal constitute two domains between which they regularly learn to mediate. For the Latino, this problem is compounded by the fact that Latino cultures do not foster such separation of domains in the first place.

Learning to write academically, therefore, involves more than learning the conventions of a specialized language; it involves a cultural shift, a shift to a new, distinctively different and, from the Latino’s point of view, a restrictive mode of experience. In essence, what the academic code demands is primarily writing that is divorced from passion and tends to be abstract and objective. This problem may partly explain the difficulties some Latino faculty may face in meeting the demands of academia for publications. Gloria Anzaldua speaks to this very issue: “How hard it is for us to think we can choose to become writers, much less feel and believe that we can. What have we to contribute, to give? Our own expectations condition us. Does not our class, our culture as well as the white man tell us writing is not for women such as us?”<sup>50</sup>

Yet for most of the Latina academicians quoted here, using the strength of their storytelling as oral and written narratives is one of the most direct forms of their expression. A Honduran researcher/consultant expressed this sentiment succinctly: “When I write in Spanish I tell my story and give it breath. When I write in English I begin to sterilize my language by the shortness of the words and the directness of meaning.”<sup>51</sup>

Such narrative styles are not accepted as part of academic writing. The use of metaphors or personal examples may be viewed as abstract and simple; avoiding too much relation of the personal is taught early on through graduate training and writing for publications.

Similar experiences occur with language use, particularly in the delivery of formal lectures. The very mode of presentation requires principled judgments about one's audience, degree of engagement, and information overload. One of the most common expressions heard by these Latinas is "how articulate one is in presenting the topic under discussion." Such expression assumes both amazement at the appropriate use of English, given the fact that one's own first language is Spanish, but also that the presentation can be made in English even with a detected underlying accent. Such expressions tend to hide more than they reveal, and they are so commonly employed that many of my Latina colleagues have come to expect them.

Speaking, like writing, commands a certain presence of mind that structures the very act of speaking. To be direct and get right to the point are notable attributes to be mastered even by a novice educator. Yet the use of appropriate body language in conveying one's message is equally important. One of the Mexican women faculty felt frustrated upon reading a student's evaluation, which said: "This would be a worthwhile class, if you wouldn't use your hands. In focusing on your hands, you distract my train of thought." While the faculty member felt she could be on guard about her hand movements during a lecture, she had to admit that she used her hands naturally and unknowingly, actions that would be hard to change.

A similar cultural hiatus exists in relation to interpersonal social attitudes. Mainstream educators generally expect their students to take the initiative to approach them with problems, to speak up in class, and to be assertive. They also tend, in varying degrees, to adopt an informal, roughly egalitarian approach toward students when they permit or encourage them, for instance, to call them by their first names.<sup>52</sup>

By contrast, within Latino cultures, professors are conceived by the older generations of Latinos as being akin to a parent. He or she is expected to be the person in authority, with an inherent right to redress or reprimand whenever necessary.<sup>53</sup> The response of graduate students to faculty tends by and large to be based on the social rights that accrue to such status. Thus roles are fixed for faculty as they are for students. This conception is likely to influence the relationship Latino graduate students form with diverse faculty at universities.

Based upon these cues, silence and showing respect may be as expected behaviors on the part of Latina graduate students as are deference and authority for the faculty member. Some Latinas, depending on their upbringing and family values, may be greatly disinclined to approach a faculty member directly and do so only after great hesitation and a sense of undertaking. As the Argentine faculty member commented:

I only learned to respond to my Latina students after I observed them approach me as a group. I noticed that when they had an institutional query or problem, they first talked to their parents, then to their classmates, and only then, if they were accompanied by several people, would they meet up with me. Thus I am no longer surprised to hear from other professors that their Latina students do not ritualistically meet them even though office hours are posted.<sup>54</sup>

It is clear that Latinas, both graduate students and faculty, tend to rely on the social networks they are accustomed to. Thus the ritual of first relying on their social networks before having openly to confide their issues to an administrator, faculty member, or counselor may be both family and culture dependent. These cues are constantly liable to be misunderstood by the mainstream educator who has insufficient empathy and under-

standing for his and her students' cultural worlds. Reticence and silence, for instance, are frequently misunderstood as signs of lack of interest, or even of intelligence.<sup>55</sup>

Lack of sympathy may also lead to a misreading of critical events in an adult's life. To take but one example, one of the Puerto Rican faculty members commented that in her committee work, "graduate students who demonstrated emotions, particularly on the personal statements of admission forms, appeared to be interpreted by other mainstream readers as projecting weaknesses, instability, and inability to cope with the stress of academia." Thus the committee's reaction was to favor the more traditional and direct expressions of interest, devoid of emotionalism and passion.

For the Latina professor tuning in to these aspects may in fact place such a faculty member at a disadvantage, particularly when seen in the light of other students. Some of my Latina associates commented that they had to be careful about not appearing to favor Latino students who had emotional issues so that they would be seen as objective and impartial. It is evident that greater attention to the meanings that these and other aspects of life and behavior contain would go a long way toward helping Latinas unfold their potential in educational institutions.

Among those characteristics which are distinctive of Latino culture(s) is a sense of active, ongoing obligation a Latino feels toward his or her family, group, neighborhood, barrio, community, and in some cases, country of origin. This *personalismo* or personal-relationship building carries with it a set of obligations and expectations. These obligations increase and multiply as the individual acquires certain skills — speaking English, conducting research, or negotiating grant funding, for example — and comes to occupy a position of status and eminence in a mainstream organization such as a university. The individual is scarcely detached, in the first place, from the family. Hence, conformity and compliance to meeting individual expectations can be readily called into action by other Latina students or colleagues. For this reason, the mainstream American, brought up as she or he is with a strong streak of individualism, would find it hard to understand the Latino's sense of obligation to relate his or her job to the demands and expectations of the community.

At the family level, professional Latinas feel duty bound to devote part of their lives to looking after not only their husbands, but parents, children, and extended family members too — even those who may be single parents. As a result, they make career decisions in close consultation with family members — something, incidentally, that non-Latino counselors are prone to devalue or misunderstand.<sup>56</sup> But this network of obligations and reference extends well beyond the family, embracing the young and the elderly of the community as a whole.

For most of the women in these observations, particularly those who live with their families or are close to them, the idea of counting on extended family members to achieve their educational goals stands out as a major reason contributing to their success. In their estimation, it is not the success of one individual, but the success of the group that counts. This contrasts sharply with the notion that one can achieve single-handedly in academia. Thus the zeal with which commitments are undertaken often exceeds the limitations of the task and places high demands on the performance of many.

The attainment of rank and position at an institution such as a major university is perceived by many Latinos as carrying an automatic obligation to society and hence to its members. The status holder is expected to serve as a role model for the youth in the

community. Her obligations are seen as part of the reciprocal *deberes* and *pagares* — “duties” and “trade-offs” — that one constantly contracts through the passage of life and personal relationships. The more needy segments in the community expect attention, help, and favors from the fortunate among them who have “made it” in the wider society and essentially represent them.<sup>57</sup> Within the academic community, these expectations may entail help beyond the required advisement and mentoring in seeking financial support, grants, or social reciprocities such as the exchange of child care for other services, translations, typing, and so on.

Such expectations entail expenditure of time and effort, of which there is little understanding or appreciation in a typical university, which directs attention away from the faculty’s research and academic demands. Thus, it is occasionally with some trepidation that Latina academicians take other Latinas under their wing, knowing what the risks and demands may be. The Latina academician may benefit the student directly, and may herself benefit from working cooperatively, but she may also find herself criticized by her colleagues for placing “community concerns, personal interests, and students’ needs ahead of her career.” (This notion was shared by all of the women in the study.)

Some of these Latinas find themselves caught within the demands of the larger institutional culture, the demands of their own cultural group, and the demands of students who look to them for guidance as role models. This within-group set of demands is not clearly understood from one Latina to another and may in fact create serious tensions, particularly when the demand seems inappropriate in the context of academic culture. For example, expecting to receive a recommendation simply because it is “owed” to one by reason of personal and social ties can create undue tension for the person recommending. Mixing personal demands with professional needs may lead to the development of entitlements that are socially expected to be “redeemable” when needed. It may be particularly hard to back away from such a request, especially during times of promotion and tenure review, when recommendations for a faculty’s dossier may be solicited without asking. By far the most frustrating situation expressed by many of these Latinas has been the number of times they have found themselves competing with one another for the available limited resources of a grant, research project, or even publications, or when they have been naive in failing to understand that they have been pitted against each other for a single tenured slot or administrative position.

Aside from these social obligations, Latinas also find themselves in situations where they have been hired as faculty to teach, conduct research, and advise students, yet have not themselves been mentored by others. According to Henry Trueba, there are specific issues about mentoring which merit attention: (1) the commitment by institutions of higher education to formalize a process for mentoring junior faculty; (2) the understanding of the nature of mentoring as a two-way process of interaction, as “assisted performance” and as “culturally congruent”; and (3) the reciprocal, collective commitment to mentoring via networks and other cooperative arrangements.<sup>58</sup>

The mentoring experiences of most of the Latinas represented here can best be described by the adage “Be sure you have a white male mentoring you.” Most have learned to gain entry, direction, and positioning within the academic structure by being mentored primarily by “significant white males,” and secondarily by “important and visible Latino males” and “other women,” particularly mainstream women in power, who have gained a foothold in an institution. Two-thirds of the women surveyed have been mentored by faculty or administrators outside their institutions; the remaining third

have risen to their faculty or administrative positions after being at their institutions for more than ten years and developing internal networks of support. Because the total network of Latinos in education nationwide is small, it is likely that Latinas become targeted early on in their professional development. Two of the women were in fact “targets of opportunity” for faculty positions at state universities, yet neither moved, since both had ongoing research in communities.

Seldom have Latinas in power been at the forefront of their mentoring. First, because being mentored by other Latinas is a rarity, except where sufficient numbers of Latinos and established networks of Latino scholars can be identified. Second, because many Latina mentors themselves are struggling to survive within the institutional framework and find themselves overwhelmed, unable to take anyone under their tutelage. The mentoring they do provide may be sporadic and limited, relegated mostly to advising through coursework. Third, where mainstream faculty mentor Latinas, their interest may be peripheral to the research interests of the Latina, who is invested in her community; therefore, the contribution of time and energy become scarce commodities, generating separate domains of interest. It is not uncommon for a Latina researcher/faculty to be attached to a project that is of interest to mainstream faculty simply because, she says, “as a Latina I add the ethnic color or viability for the project to have a Latino component.”<sup>59</sup>

Mentoring by Latinas or other Latinos has not been part of the conventional experience for Latina academicians even though within the cultural communities of Latinos, particularly Chicanos or Mexicanos, *comadres* and *compadres* (godmothers and godfathers) are commonly one’s first mentors. Their track record, compared with that of mainstream women, depicts a more recently learned style of being academically socialized.<sup>60</sup> The younger generations of Latina researchers are able to parlay these acquired social and academic skills into their professional portfolios, but for the older generation of Latina scholars who have made it on their own, the notion of mentoring, while commonly known within Latino cultures, appears to be “new” on the academic horizon.

These examples of research, language, social obligations, and within-group demands are a few of the more apparent reasons why the voices of Latinas have not fared well within academic and research settings. However, they alone do not explain the nature of underrepresentation. To understand how such underrepresentation is played out, we need to turn to an analysis of the structure of academe and identify the institutional roles and responses Latinas encounter and the ways that gender differences work for and against them.

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### **Analysis of Common Themes and Elements**

The difficulties facing the Latina educator do not arise solely from the incompatibility between the values and cultural assumptions of the two worlds in which she moves. They are also a direct consequence of the terms in which her being and role are defined by the institution that hires her. Among the common themes and elements that have emerged for most of these Latinas in their academic and institutional experiences are the following:

#### ***Quién es Quién: Role Definition***

In today’s world, such a professional is hired to be a representative of Latinos as a “minority” category. In this classification, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Central and South Americans, and Cubans are all described as a homogenous, undifferentiated



class.<sup>61</sup> Such pigeonholing imposes simultaneous visibility and invisibility on its members. Visibility is evident in the department's portrayal of the Latino or Latina faculty as its "ethnic" professor, serving on committees, doctoral admissions, university councils, and so forth. Invisibility is apparent when one's role is ignored, diminished, or undermined. The fragile balance between being a faculty member and being perceived as a representative of an ethnic group places one in a state of limbo. For example, when one of the Mexican Latinas was asked to submit a biographical statement on her teaching and research interests for the university catalog, she readily complied, submitted the required information, then discovered, to her chagrin, that she had been left out of the catalog altogether. After inquiring why this had happened (it proved to be clerical error), she was told by the associate dean "not to raise any ruckus by making demands that material be included after the catalog had already gone to the printers, but to simply hand out [my] bio statements during student orientation." Although the same faculty member was praised as the first full-time Latina professor at this prestigious university, she was ignored by her omission from a key source of information for students and other faculty.

In other instances, the usage of names becomes part of the visibility/invisibility dichotomy. The use of one's Latino name carries greater currency within an institution than an Anglicized version or, for several of the women, a hyphenated name. Therefore, the custom of Latinas' using double names (father's and mother's last names), or their married and paternal names, may present not only pronunciation problems for the university community, but even worse when the name is not commonly recognized as "Latino," it may lack authenticity.

### ***La Unica: One-of-a-Kind Representation***

Unlike African-American female academicians who over the years have built strong platforms of power and academic credibility across U.S. institutions of higher learning, Latinas have not experienced the same access or support for gaining a foothold in academia. This is partly due to the fact that outside the geographic areas where Latinos are concentrated and numerically visible, having a Latina faculty member in an institution where she is the only "one of a kind representative for Latinos" does not in itself obligate the institution to look at its commitment beyond meeting affirmative action criteria. Thus, the visibility is the recognition enshrined in, among other things, affirmative action programs and "tokenism."

### ***Que Sí, Que No: Fit or Lack of Fit***

The single Latina in a department or college may easily fall prey to a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" dilemma. On the one hand, when it is necessary, the Latina academician is considered to be the mentor of all Latinos in the program, is assigned all the Latinos or Spanish-surname students as her advisees, is asked to do any translations into Spanish that may be needed on their behalf, is expected to advocate for their interests since she best represents their needs, and is most appropriate to guide them through their doctoral studies. On the other hand, the same faculty member, viewed as a professional in her given field, is expected to fulfill the demands of committee meetings, teaching, conducting research, and publishing while sustaining Latinos students in their scholarly endeavors. If she does not engage in such demands, she may be viewed as failing to contribute to their advancement; and if does, she may be viewed as overex-

tending herself because she has to prove herself to her colleagues. As Herrera Escobedo cogently expresses it, "The specific identity of the professional qua professional is suppressed or ignored."<sup>62</sup>

This same dilemma arises when the Latina is characterized as the "multicultural or Latino" expert because of her background, experience, or teaching in these areas. Yet at the same time, that expertise can be readily developed by mainstream faculty simply through readings on a subject or the creation of a course. As one of the Puerto Rican women said, "You're either the multicultural expert or you are not. But you can't be one today and not tomorrow."

This ambiguity is particularly evident when other Latinas, who are new arrivals in the United States, become identified as the "multicultural experts overnight," based solely on their use of Spanish and Latino backgrounds. In many of these cases, the issues of urban education and racial or ethnic tensions are foreign to them, yet they are asked to provide cultural training workshops without knowledge of cultural diversity in the schools or experiences of racism and discrimination. The identity of the Latina professional is thus fraught with uncertainties and perplexities. The question is, as one of the Latinas compellingly asked, "Are we hired as minorities to only teach minorities? Or are we hired as professionals?"<sup>63</sup>

### ***La Latina Más Latina: Ethnic Overrepresentation***

One's feeling of belonging to an institution is always made difficult by the realization that ethnic representation is the basis on which one attends committee meetings, participates in admissions procedures, provides orientation to "underrepresented" students, and presents multicultural or cultural analyses to alumnae and board members on special occasions. The rituals demanded by being the "Latino on board" make it difficult to be understood on one's own merits.

### ***Acción Afirmativa, Acción Negativa: Affirmative Action/Negative Action***

The Latina professionals' sense of underrecognition is aggravated by the circumstances of affirmative action, especially with regard to access, retention, and promotion policies. While several Latina researchers would argue that affirmative action policy initiatives at their institutions provided access by opening doors, they would also confirm that "just as the doors were opened, they were immediately shut behind."

Selection procedures, to start with, are centered almost exclusively on numerical attainment or quotas. Consider the fact that in many academic committee meetings, Latinas are invited in order to assure fair representation of all ethnic groups, yet the visibility of Latinas as one of a kind carries little weight beyond the numerical or visibility set of values. A case in point is a dean's report to the president of the university at an institution where one of the Latina professionals teaches. The dean informed the president that the college had made substantive strides in its hiring of "five blacks and one Latino" as minority faculty. The question this raises is, Would the same have been true for the hiring of "ten whites"?

This external, quantitative aim is pursued to the exclusion of any thoughts about the professional development or fulfillment of the candidate once she has been hired. Only five of the fifteen Latinas were involved in any orientation meeting or discussion by a chairperson, describing what they should and could expect for their future at their respective institutions.

Once one is confirmed as faculty, there are no guarantees set into motion to provide retention or promotion, particularly in nontenure situations. The mentoring and teaching of implicit rules for professional advancement — what committees to belong to, when to request promotion, how to situate oneself on the career ladder, what projects to engage in, what research will advance one's future — are not readily shared or fostered, either by peers competing for the same promotion or by senior tenured faculty who are not direct mentors. Left alone, the Latina faculty member needs to politicize herself about the culture of academe in order to define her next steps.

This learning by default may not provide the professional advancement that Latinas hope to achieve. So the rules for survival become ends in themselves, overtaxing the faculty member's energies away from gaining the rewards of the culture. In cases where promotion is denied and retention is unlikely, Latinas are faced with few redeeming possibilities. They either seek other employment within the institution, go into administration, or leave altogether. The few that challenge the culture under discrimination suits engage in long-term struggles on their own. Because affirmative action policies within such institutions are defined in terms of programs, not the individual, discrimination or racism charges are simply ignored. If general quotas are met, the individual case does not matter. One Latina painfully learned this lesson as a former Ivy League faculty member. Although her chair prompted her to go for a promotion based on the review of her work, she was overturned by a committee composed of faculty who were newly hired, had opposing views on the content this faculty taught, and did not share the Latina's research interests. When the Latina confronted the chair about why she had been "set up," the chair replied that in academia "nothing ventured was nothing gained." This response prompted the faculty member to reapply for the promotion a year later before a committee chaired by a member of her department and faculty representatives who were aware of her research. She was promoted to associate professor, but her non-tenure contract was not renewed. Thus, the learning that goes on is by happenstance, not because it is promoted. A Puerto Rican faculty commented: "We learn not because we are given the time of day, but because we learn *a contazos* [by hard blows]."

In at least two cases, discriminatory practices in the promotion of Latinas were clearly identified. Realizing that there was no viable mechanism or support within the institutional framework which would deal with specific cases, one faculty member sought legal recourse. Unable to prove discriminatory cause, she was simply "silenced" by not having her contract renewed. The other Latina was deflected from filing a discrimination suit by being given strong recommendations to go elsewhere.

### ***La Puerta Giratoria: The Revolving Door Syndrome***

Another well-known practice for non-tenure-track faculty is rotation of their contracts until a limited number of years is reached — known as the revolving door syndrome. While their mainstream counterparts, particularly at the Ivy Leagues, would "do anything to stay at the school," the year-to-year rotation has caused some of these Latinas to decide to take other, nonacademic positions which, while not appealing, at minimum provide more than lateral moves within the hierarchical academic structure. Others have dealt with the revolving door by taking on joint appointments in two areas or departments so that they can at least be assured of an additional year.

Tenure, the pinnacle of one's defined status and position within academia, is not seen as the most likely avenue of promotion or retention by several of these Latinas. In fact,

most would argue that the ante for being hired, promoted, and tenured has been raised in the last thirty years. During the 1960s and 1970s, the commonplace explanation was that there weren't any qualified (minority) faculty or candidates for the available positions. Today, that same explanation, particularly at some prestigious institutions, has greater qualifiers. It is not surprising to hear it said that "there are no world-class [minorities] to be tenured at our institution." Knowing this, several Latinas in my study have decided that getting close to the centers of power through administrative posts may present better alternatives than their faculty positions. Two have left academic tenure-track positions to become administrators within the same institutions or elsewhere.

Such experiences force Latinas to see their academic life as short-lived, with periodically renewed contracts for a finite period of time. Being deprived of the opportunity to view one's career as a linear, progressive, and purposive path undermines one's identity as a professional. As a result, one's sense of being a "token" employee, representing a whole diffuse race or class, is enhanced, causing resentment and a sense of nonfulfillment and, above all, isolation, which manifests itself in subtle ways. It is not the isolation of being alone, but the isolation of being invisible, except when it comes to dealing with "ethnic or underrepresented issues." It is no wonder that many, discouraged by such a likelihood, leave academia.

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### **Institutional Racism and Discrimination**

Underlying the sense of isolation and mistrust is also the sense of not belonging in academia. Reyes and Halcón have fully explored the basis of this feeling for Latino, and more specifically Chicano, faculty in "Racism in Academia: The Old Wolf Revisited."<sup>64</sup> Using examples of covert racism (elusive and implicit practices), Reyes and Halcón highlight how they serve to maintain the current status of Chicanos in academia and their small numbers. For the Latinas represented here, several of these practices have already been discussed, such as tokenism, being in positions that have been set aside for a limited number of scholars in either nonacademic or soft-money programs and do not legitimate Latinos as serious scholars, and the one-minority-per-pot syndrome, whereby there is room for only one minority faculty member per department to "represent" all Latinos at different committee and academic meetings, and "the brown-on-brown research taboo," where Latinos attempting to conduct research on their own communities are devalued, namely, considered self-serving, or minor in comparison with other scholars.<sup>65</sup>

Additional examples are cited. For instance, the typecasting syndrome, in which Latinos "can and should . . . only occupy minority-related positions" becomes a means to guarantee that Latinos are "ghettoized," serving only underrepresented groups without being seen outside their affixed roles, and the "hairsplitting concept," which refers to the use of subjective or arbitrary reasons for not hiring or promoting underrepresented faculty even though they meet all the required criteria of academe.<sup>66</sup>

Chicanos respond to such racism, say Reyes and Halcón, by giving in — simply accepting the norm as a given and assimilating at all costs; by giving up — experiencing burnout as a consequence of their struggle for righting injustices; by moving on — keeping the commitment to their communities alive while becoming realists and learning to pick their fights; or by fighting back — through perseverance or sacrifice of their academic careers.<sup>67</sup>

Latinos at large tend to share some of these same responses with some variations, but for Latinas, the pressure to prove themselves to their colleagues takes on additional dimensions, including women's caring role. For example, it is not uncommon for Latinas to overcompensate for their assumed academic scholarliness through extended committee and community work, by taking on tasks that others refuse, or by overextending themselves through community research and social functions. Latinas frequently turn to their Latino colleagues for support, and while they may expect reciprocity, even there they may encounter obstruction to their achievement. The persistence of such obstruction is based on the relative distance of Latinas on the academic ladder.

### **Intergroup and Intragroup Obstruction**

The relation of Latinas to the social expectations and socialization of academe merits attention. Because a Latina is farther removed from the academic old-boy network than her Latino or female counterparts, she has to overcome more obstacles to garner the support of several constituencies for academic advancement. Within the old-boy network, a common role undertaken by several of the Latinas has been in educating their white male counterparts about Latino cultures. While such teaching is considered part of the general learning about diversity and is positively promoted, it may wear thin for the Latina, particularly if the process is unidimensional and her mainstream counterpart evinces a passive response. There comes a time, says a Puerto Rican Latina, "when you stop teaching and expect some understanding in return. I don't have the time to always be teaching; some of the real learning comes from one's willingness to be vulnerable."<sup>68</sup>

Likewise, when the relationship between the Latina and the mainstream male is differentiated by rank or status, knowing when there is genuine respect for one's ideas, without condescension, is critical. Hence the best matches between white male faculty and Latinas are created when mentoring and supportive undertakings such as presentations at conferences, conducting research, and collaborative publishing take place. During conferences and forums, showing that there are commonalities between the perspectives of white males and Latinas lends legitimacy to the research being presented. Moreover, mentoring of Latinas by white males helps in establishing the "right" set of networks.

In terms of the "old-girl" network, several of the experiences shared by the Latinas indicate that being female does not necessarily guarantee the sympathy of mainstream women toward them nor does it offer entry into mainstream academic domains. In fact, the role most commonly experienced by Latinas is that of informant about Latino cultures for these female researchers. One Chicana echoed, "I was always singled out when we needed to present research about underserved communities or make statements about the Latino population; otherwise, my research was ignored."<sup>69</sup>

In other cases, the belief that prevails is that a Latina researcher or faculty member has to become acculturated or assimilated into the culture of mainstream academia by mainstream women, an issue that apparently is still far from being realized by mainstream feminists. Indeed, one of the difficult issues for some of the Latinas has been their observation of how some white female academicians attempt to appease white males by being particularly "hardworking, overzealous about their teaching, and overly committed," the so-called Stepford wives syndrome.<sup>70</sup> In these situations, the rewards for hard work and productivity may result in support for promotion and tenure, but the

price for conformity within the hierarchy of academia may be reminiscent of patriarchal domination and subordination, an experience Latinas do not necessarily wish to confront.

When collegiality between a Latina and an old-girl academician is achieved, their interests for collaboration most likely arise from deep mutual respect and the shared experiences of academic oppression. The sisterhood of women may have greater impact and power than single issues or conflicts. Thus women helping other women becomes one way in which the rites of passage are learned and transferred between mainstream and Latina academicians. Such rites require that Latinas have, using Bourdieu's terminology, tradable "cultural capital," namely, a set of beliefs, values, and shared vision that can be used as currency within academia. By employing the required cultural capital to fit the demands of mainstream academia, Latinas can also incorporate the socio-cultural and indigenous strategies they use to sustain themselves within their own cultural group for their mainstay. In academe, this means understanding how not only the old-boy and old-girl networks operate but, more important, how the "brown boy" network — the euphemism of several of the Latinas — functions to their advantage or obstruction.

Among the Latinas represented here, the consensus was that even when Latinas are able to overcome some of the social and academic institutional obstacles, they still have to face the barrier that their Latino male counterparts create. How that obstruction occurs is described by these women for single cases. Yet the consensus is that because few tenure-track positions in education are available, and because greater numbers of Latinos within the faculty pool are attempting to move into such slots, the competition for limited positions and resources is exacerbated by the greater numbers of Latinas participating in education. Another issue is the number of director's research positions available to Latinas. Traditionally, Latinos have chaired Chicano studies programs, and because the power in research dollars translates into institutional clout, Latinas are still vying for entry into such positions. In at least two reported cases, Latinas were overpowered and closed out from department decision making by Latinos in powerful research positions.

Once Latinas have gained entry into faculty positions, the question focuses on what they can expect from their Latino counterparts, given the variations of their own experiences in academia and requests for their support. Several Latinas stated that they had expected to gain the collegueship and promotion of their work by their own Latinos, much like the implicit meaning of the *dicho* (saying), "*Para que la cuña apriete, tiene que ser del mismo palo*" (For the cog to fit, it must be made from the same wood). However, in at least one-third of these cases, Latinas encountered avoidance from their colleagues, for example, distancing responses, resistance, or confrontational reactions to their requests for support. They found themselves being critiqued against the same criteria that mainstream academics demanded of them — scholarly research and sufficient referred publications. For most of the other Latinas, their professional experiences with Latinos were based on established personal relationships and mentoring opportunities. Having a *padrino* (godfather) was found to be quite helpful by many, particularly if the Latino had mastered the requirements of academia and could teach the Latina how to use the system.

There may be a shared set of rules, behaviors, and expectations Latino women and men adhere to as part of the cultural domains of each community and cultural subgroup, but within the academic culture of higher education, such norms may be challenged, and shifts in the implicit ways of conducting one's social affairs may give way to other evi-

dent institutional pressures and personal gains. Because Latinos have gained entry into academia in greater numbers does not mean that they work within the constructs of a Latino consciousness in academia. Whether the reasons for obstruction lie in what feminists consider the inherent patriarchy of academia — impermeable to change — or whether they have more to do with competition for limited resources, or even gender expectations between Latinos and Latinas, what is clear is that there is no uniform or underlying basis on which Latina academicians can assume that they can count on the support of Latinos.

How Latinas actually fare when there are Latino academic counterparts within departments is an important question to be raised. In fact, the need to analyze race/ethnic and class domination, which traditionally has been the thrust of the Chicano movement and Chicano studies programs, must incorporate, as Beatriz Pesquera and Adela de la Torre emphasize, a gender critique.<sup>71</sup>

The interconnections of culture and power, as well as visibility/invisibility of Latinas, along with issues of race, class, and gender within and between Latino cultural domains, are some of the significant arenas in which Latina feminist discourse, scholarship, and research have emerged. Gaining an understanding of the relational complexities for both Latinos and Latinas in academia is imperative. To understand this challenge, we need to situate Chicana/Mexicana scholarship and feminism within the discussion of mainstream feminism.

### **Latina versus Mainstream Feminism**

While Latinas have for decades contributed to the development of ethnic studies, only recently have they “carved an institutional niche in academe.”<sup>72</sup> The cultural knowledge and grounding of Latinas has in fact taken place through women’s studies groups, community programs, Latino U.S.-based literature, and the novels, biographies, and critiques written by Latin American women who have a following in the United States.<sup>73</sup> As Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith contend, “In academic and cultural circles, Third World women have become the subject matter of many literary and artistic endeavors by white women, and yet we are refused access to the pen, the publishing house, the galleries, and the classroom.”<sup>74</sup>

Women’s studies and women’s community programs have been among the avenues where expression of Latina academic endeavors have found a voice, where mainstream feminists embrace the experiences of “women of color” as their own.<sup>75</sup> This accommodation is aptly explained by Judith Moschkovich:

When Anglo-American women speak of developing a new feminist or women’s culture, they are still working and thinking within an Anglo-American cultural framework. This new culture would still be just as racist and ethno-centric as patriarchal American culture. I have often confronted the attitude that anything that is “different” is male. Therefore if I hold on to my Latin culture I am holding on to hateful patriarchal constructs. Meanwhile, the Anglo woman who deals with the world in her Anglo way, with her Anglo culture is being “perfectly feminist.”<sup>76</sup>

Part of what is needed is not having to explain and defend each other’s cultures, since each culture encompasses individual, social, moral, and political concerns of cultures undergoing change. Rather, asserts Moschkovich:

Learning about other cultures must be a sharing experience. An experience where American women learn on their own without wanting to be spoonfed by Latinas, but don't become experts after one book, one conversation or one stereotype. It is a delicate balance which can only be achieved with caring and respect for each other.<sup>77</sup>

The distinction between Latinas' and Anglo women's feminist ideologies is uniquely different, by historical context, development, and experience. According to Lynn Stoner, Latin American feminists distinguish themselves from North American feminists, whom they consider to be antimale and antifamily. They do not realize that nineteenth-century North American women upheld similar values for the home and family and that the values of generations of American women in the 1940s and 1950s were also the same.<sup>78</sup> Nonetheless, says Stoner, Latin American feminists have been influenced by North American feminists: "Latin women were loath even to apply the term feminist to themselves because it had originated in the Anglo cultures and did not belong to their own lexicon."<sup>79</sup> Yet Latin women's reactions took the form of a sense of moderation in rejecting free love and the hatred of patriarchy expressed by North American feminists.

Today the resulting accommodation for many Latina feminists is the idea that one can simultaneously be feminist and feminine, critical and an advocate, objective and subjective, and community-based and social change oriented. Beyond calling into question the social and ideological apparatus that sustains racial and gender inequality and advances oppression, Latina feminists look to their communities for their strength and positive cultural production. Imbalances within the family, as well as women's political, social, and economic positions, are being explored and exposed.

Within the academic domain, these shifts in paradigms are being translated by Latinas into the ability to carry their culture on their sleeve, while knowing when to use power in brokering outcomes. For example, at a presentation by a Latina administrator who is one of the few deans at an Ivy League, her message on surviving the system to the women of the group was, "Take off the red lipstick and the dangling earrings if you are wearing and expecting to use your corporate suit to the fullest. Know what is expected of you and how to best deliver."

In this vein, Latina feminists across the United States are providing critiques of not only the way the society is structured hierarchically, but also how privilege and power are linked to male domination and to institutional and current academic cultures. Chicana/Mexicana scholarship and research is about challenging "analytical frameworks that dichotomize the multiple source of Chicana oppression; at the same time, it posits alternative frameworks grounded in the Chicana experience."<sup>80</sup>

To that end, several projects and programs have emerged, for instance, the Cultural Studies Task Force at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, the Chicana/Latina Research Project at the University of California at Davis, Women's Research Group Intercambio, City University of New York and the State University of New York systems, and the University of Puerto Rico, the National Puerto Rican Studies Association, and the Puertorriqueña/Chicana Comparative Research Project at the University of California at Santa Barbara sponsored by the Inter-University Program for Latino Research. The discussions at these centers focus on definitions of feminism, democratizing education, new research paradigms and methodologies, and interpreta-



tions of Latina and Latino history.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, concrete topics such as issues of immigration, civil rights, racism, poverty, economy, health, education, recruitment and retention of students and faculty, cultural studies, gender, sexuality issues, adolescent and family issues, reproductive rights, welfare, and discrimination are being presented.<sup>82</sup>

What clearly differentiates the research emphasis of Latina feminists from mainstream feminists is their challenge of traditional disciplines, Chicano studies and feminist theory, and the grounding of their thinking and curriculum in the community. According to Gloria Romero, "The work of Latinas must be at the disposal of and must benefit the community. If not, it can be progressive in challenging sexism, but ineffective in challenging the problems that beset the entire Latino community."<sup>83</sup>

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### **Policy Implications**

The emphasis on women's issues and education have prompted the publication of several key reports on women in academe, including Latinas. Rather than repeating the recommendations these reports have made, which are directed at general issues, administrators, institutional data collection, curriculum, faculty, students, professional associations, organizations, and department chairs, search, promotion and tenure committees, meetings, special groups of women, graduate students, professional development programs, and individual men on campus, the policy implications I wish to reiterate and emphasize are derived from the Latinas' observations of their experiences and the literature reviewed.<sup>84</sup> While these are limited by their degree of generalizability, they are nonetheless reflective of shared common themes and elements, even for the small number of Latinas. Hence their value is in identifying areas where serious research, program development, and paradigm shifts might be considered, given an understanding of Latinas' social, professional, and cultural experiences. These implications follow.

#### ***Expand the Research on Latinas in Academia***

Our knowledge about the experiences of Latinas in education is still quite new. We need to conduct research and document their experiences from junior high, high school, undergraduate, and graduate school to their professional careers. Such research must be systematically driven by quantitative data that are not misleading, as Olivas points out in using the "percentage increase approach" and "inter-ethnic group comparisons," which do not justify any characterizations because of size and lack of reliability.<sup>85</sup> In fact, imprecision about the data sample in disaggregation has led to implications about Latinos from samples that may be drawn only from Puerto Ricans or Mexicans.<sup>86</sup> Thus, Olivas strongly suggests having the research perspective of Latinos as an understanding of the research problem. In addition, the use of qualitative and ethnographic studies that yield intragroup analysis and comparative cultural group findings can be enormously useful in grounding the experiences of Latinas across multisites.<sup>87</sup> This requires that we expand within the research focus to include the experiences of black and Asian Latinas as well as immigrant, migrant, and U.S.- and non-U.S.-born Latinas. We also need to analyze the educational achievement and advancement of Latinas intergenerationally to identify potent influences such as assimilation and the two-tiered educational process that Jorge Chapa has described for first-, second-, and third-generation Mexican-Americans.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Integrate Research***

As previously noted, it is not sufficient to focus research solely on the individual factors affecting Latinas' advancement in academia. We also have to understand the conditions under which they become professional, and that requires analyzing the contexts in which Latinas become educators as well as their own educational training and delivery. This means creating opportunities through research institutes for Latinas to focus on their own dilemmas as objects of study. It also implies that the conditions which constrain as well as engage Latinas in their education need to be identified and analyzed through longitudinal studies. In short, the focus of Latino institutes and Latina feminist research centers has to integrate the individual, interpersonal, instructional, and structural analysis of Latinas and document the constraints and advancements that institutions of higher learning provide. Such studies and their findings may call into question whether the basic hierarchical ladder to achievement in academia supports Latinas as well as other women and whether a reconceptualization of the field and restructuring strategies for academia might not be in order.

### ***Develop Institutional Infrastructure***

Clearly, the experiences shared herein profess the lack of infrastructure that accommodates the educational experiences of Latinas. To move ahead in their academic career tracks, Latinas must have in place an infrastructure that more than tolerates their presence. It requires a radical shift in the rationality currently prevailing in institutions of higher learning from their hierarchical, albeit patriarchal, stance to a more egalitarian and collaborative model of educational undertaking, because over the next twenty years, institutions of higher learning will be replacing retired faculty. Estimates are that approximately 500,000 faculty will be needed across the United States to offset retirements; then the proactive thinking which develops a readily restructured infrastructure to accept Latino faculty needs to be in place.<sup>89</sup> The current wave of temporary positions for women and Latinas has to give way to full-time positions; promotion and tenure will have to move at a faster and more equitable pace; and universities will have to groom the necessary critical mass of Latina scholars. This will require experimentation of several models which, unlike the pipeline theory, do not assume that a linear process is in place for the ascendancy of Latinas. In fact, what seems more appropriate is to consider how the lives of Latina scholars might be enhanced if new structures can be created. These structures need to consider how opportunities for mentoring, sabbaticals, and networking, as well as provisions for child care, can be creatively constructed.

### ***Assess the Curriculum***

Concentrated efforts need to be made about gathering, monitoring, and following the small yet growing numbers of Latinas in higher education by assessing under what set of circumstances they respond to academic teaching and research opportunities. This is to suggest that infusing curriculum with Latino representation or creating Latino studies programs in a vacuum will not be sufficient to change the ethos of mainstream academic culture. Instead, a variety of processes need to be developed to target individual, instructional, and institutional levels of program delivery. Traditionally, Latinas have been made to fit the academic system. Instead, what is being advocated is a combination of efforts on the part of universities, communities, and incoming Latina academicians to guarantee their place in teaching and research. Therefore, programs need to

include not only mentoring, peer coaching, writing, and language development, along with biliteracy and bilinguality as core integrated skills, but ongoing practicums whereby Latinas can test their own educational ideas and core coursework that include Latino content and Latino community input. Such programs need not be directed solely at Latinos, but should integrate mainstream students and faculty as well. Coteaching by Latino community leaders who help university faculty and students identify concrete issues worthy of research needs to be promoted so that the community's interests are represented. The intent is to develop a philosophical core within the curriculum and instructional programs which opens up dialogue with and about Latinas in education. In this manner, setting up an infrastructure, with coherent instructional programs directed at developing the professionalization of Latinas, while engendering universitywide policies, will be critical demarcations of successful practices.

### ***Develop Community Outreach***

The educational experiences of Latinas as graduate students and faculty need not occur in a vacuum. Instead, using the strengths of the communities themselves, a series of practicum experiences within the community can be made part of the Latinas' professional development. Such experiences can be accredited as part of the career ladder experiences for scholarly work, especially if a program or model is developed and implemented. This will undoubtedly call into question issues about teaching and research and the status granted to research over teaching. It will be necessary to break down such a dichotomy, given the thrust of collaborative research and community interventions currently under way. Thus, a reassessment of the value of teaching in guiding research and the value of research in informing teaching needs to be seriously studied, particularly as it pertains to Latinas and their educational commitments.

Such policy implications will inevitably require identifying Latinas at an early stage of their career development, setting mentoring programs in place from the middle school level on, developing peer coaching and networking strategies, creating leadership institutes directed at dealing with concrete on-the-job analysis of academic obstructions, and more important, collecting the oral histories, ethnographies of Latinas and their communities through case studies, surveys, journalistic descriptions, literary projects, and reflective analysis.

Today, the role of Latina feminist scholarship and research in directing attention to the advancement of Latinas in academia through collaborative, group efforts that emphasize working from within are necessary strategies. Programs such as the National Hispana Leadership Institute, which since 1989 has trained close to one hundred and fifty women in economic, educational, and political leadership, serve to create a cadre of Latina change agents who can serve not only the Latino but larger communities. The alliance of private and public interests in education alone can serve to exert pressure for change in academic settings.<sup>90</sup> The University of California faculty, for example, are currently engaged in using pressure to demand academic courses and teaching departments that represent the experience and contributions of Latinos, other people of color, and women.<sup>91</sup>

In summary, the reasons for underrepresentation of Latina professionals in the educational arena are manifold. These will remain misunderstood as long as explanations are proffered either in terms of individual variables or in indiscriminate racial or class terms. They require, above all, sensitivity to the cultural values, the world of meanings,

norms, and expectations that the Latina professional inhabits. The lack of congruence, in some cases, between mainstream American norms and privilege and those of Latinas is a powerful factor causing them conflicts of time, energy, and direction. As such, the incongruence has to be understood in all its ramifications if educational institutions are to respond properly to the needs of Latinos. Conditions of selection and promotion ought to facilitate rather than hinder, as they often do, the professional fulfillment of Latino members.

The reflections of the representative group of Latinas about their social, professional, and cultural experiences, and their burdens of isolation and lack of recognition, comprise a valuable source of insight into how they experience their world. They also serve as an empowering device for them, and others, to make sense of their lives, draw sustenance from their roots, and cope with the inadequacies of the situation in which they find themselves. ♡

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## Notes

1. This article is dedicated to the memory of Ramón J. Bucheli, who initially encouraged me to complete it because it spoke to the needs of Latinos and Latinas and expressed the passion of our educational lives. Bucheli, the director of bilingual education in Chelsea, Massachusetts, a former graduate student of mine, is remembered as a unique and committed colleague who left a great deal of himself behind.
2. The Census Bureau uses "Hispanic" as a generic term to characterize the total Hispanic population, including Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and "other Spanish"-origin peoples identifying themselves as Spanish, Spanish-American, Latin American, Hispano, and so forth. While Hispanic may be the most commonplace term, for the purpose of this article, I prefer the terms "Latino" as generic and "Latina" for women for their inclusiveness in describing different Latinas' experiences. However, when quoting various authors, I respect their use of Hispanic or Latino. See, for example, T. Herrera Escobedo, "Are Hispanic Women in Higher Education the Nonexistent Minority?" *Educational Researcher* 9, no. 9 (1980); R. Wilson and S. Meléndez, "Minorities in Higher Education" (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1985); V. Lee, "Access to Higher Education: The Experience of Blacks, Hispanics, and Low Socioeconomic Status Whites" (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1985); L. Darling-Hammond et al., "Career Choices for Minorities: Who Will Teach?" (Washington, D.C.: National Educational Association and Council of Chief State School Officers, Task Force on Minorities in Teaching, 1987); H. Garza and E. Cohen, "Minority Researchers and Minority Education: A Position Paper," AERA Standing Committee on the Role and Status of Minorities in Educational Research and Development, 1988; J. Chapa, "Special Focus: Hispanic Demographic and Educational Trends," in *Minorities in Higher Education*, edited by Deborah Carter and Reginald Wilson (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1991); G. Keller et al., *Assessment and Access: Hispanics in Higher Education* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991); S. Nieves-Squires, *Hispanic Women: Making Their Presence on Campus Less Tenuous*, Project on the Status and Education of Women (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1991).
3. L. Johnsrud and C. Des Jarlais, "Barriers to Tenure for Women and Minorities," *Review of Higher Education* 17, no. 4 (1994): 336.
4. Nieves-Squires, *Hispanic Women*, 2.

5. I use the term "underrepresented" rather than minorities, which best characterizes issues of inequalities for different groups in the United States, to depict such a status.
6. "U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission Report," data cited in the *Chicago Tribune*, November 25, 1993.
7. Garza and Cohen, "Minority Researchers and Minority Education," 31.
8. M. A. Olivas, "Trout Fishing in Catfish Ponds," in *Minorities in Graduate Education: Pipeline, Policy, and Practice*, edited by Jessie Jones, Margaret E. Goertz, and Charlotte V. Kuh (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1992), 47.
9. Garza and Cohen, "Minority Researchers and Minority Education," 31.
10. *Ibid.*, 22.
11. H. Garza, "National Latino Faculty Survey," raw data, 1987, cited in Garza and Cohen, "Minority Researchers and Minority Education," 24.
12. I. Middleman Thomas, "The Big Chill: The Ivy League Turns a Cold Shoulder toward Hispanic Professors," *Hispanic*, December 1994, 18.
13. *Ibid.*, 22.
14. Garza, "National Latino Faculty Survey," 26.
15. *Hispanic Americans, A Statistical Sourcebook* (Detroit: Gale Research Publications, 1993).
16. The analysis of Jeffrey F. Milem and Helen Astin, "The Changing Composition of the Faculty: What Does It Really Mean for Diversity?" *Change*, March/April 1993, 21-28, raises some interesting points. According to them, the representation of underrepresented faculty in higher education has not changed between 1972 and 1989. In fact, few gains have been made by Mexican-American and Puerto Rican faculty. However, women faculty did make some gains but continue to be underrepresented at the full professor level. Today's faculty does reflect a greater awareness and sensitivity to diversity concerns even though the hiring practices do not reflect such changes.
17. Garza and Cohen, "Minority Researchers and Minority Education," 15, citing the research of A. Noboa-Rios, "An Analysis of Hispanic Doctoral Recipients from U.S. Universities, 1900-1973: With Special Emphasis on Puerto Rican Doctorates."
18. *Ibid.*, 24.
19. Garza and Cohen, "Minority Researchers and Minority Education."
20. American Council on Education 1993.
21. According to R. J. Mengus and W. H. Exum, "Barriers to the Progress of Women and Minority Faculty," *Journal of Higher Education* 54, no. 2 (1983): 124, "During the 1970s only one woman was a full professor at Harvard; the holder of a chair endowed for a female. In 1976 Harvard had only fourteen tenured professors."
22. R. Rodriguez, "Latina Feminists Carving an Institutional Niche in Academe," *Black Issues in Higher Education*, March 1993, 28.

23. Demographic trends indicate that not only are Latinos the second fastest-growing "underrepresented" population in the United States, but by the year 2020, Latinos are expected to number between 37 million and 47 million, based on a low and high projection count of the national census. According to the American Council on Education, 1993 report, in 1980 there were 472,000 Hispanics attending institutions of higher learning, and by 1991 their numbers had risen dramatically by 84 percent to 867,000 students.
24. M. K. Chamberlain, *Women in Academe: Progress and Prospects* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988).
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 50.
27. Johnsrud and Des Jarlais, "Barriers to Tenure for Women and Minorities," 336.
28. S. Achor and A. Morales, "Chicanas Holding Doctoral Degrees: Social Reproduction and Cultural Ecological Approaches," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1990): 269-287.
29. Ibid., 280-281.
30. Attempts at counteracting the void in the knowledge of Latinas has prompted such institutions as the Schlesinger Library of Radcliffe College to invite Latina professionals to initiate a project collecting the oral histories of Latinas in the greater Boston area under a small grant. The library has gathered oral histories of black professional women, Asian women, primarily under the Cambodian Women's Project and now Latinas. To date, eight Latinas have been interviewed and videotaped, and a videotape depicting their issues has been developed.
31. Using the notion that the U.S. society has a dominant, middle-class mainstream culture and that other subgroups have underrepresented cultures, the idea of a dominant or mainstream versus underrepresented culture is used, following the framework for empowering minorities elaborated by Jim Cummins and others.
32. *The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985).
33. My use of the word "Latinas" here is not to collapse all women of Latin American or Hispanic backgrounds irrespective of their national origin into one category, but more as a device to direct attention to their issues. It should be understood that I am fully aware that Latinas' experiences vary widely and that it is not useful to generalize from single experiences. Therefore, their statements and observations, reported only in terms of general explanatory power, are not at all indicative of individual differences.
34. See Mengus and Exum, "Barriers to the Progress of Women and Minority Faculty"; M. Finkelstein, *The American Academic Profession: A Synthesis of Social Scientific Inquiry Since World War II* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984).
35. Nieves-Squires, *Hispanic Women*.
36. Ofelia Miramontes, "Hispanics in Higher Education: Adaptation, Growth and Action," *SIGUE*, newsletter of the Hispanic Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association, Spring 1987, 7.
37. See, for example, Bernice R. Sandler with the assistance of Robert M. Hall, *The Campus Climate Revisited: Chilly for Women, Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students*,

- Project on the Status and Education of Women (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1986); Nieves-Squires, *Hispanic Women*; Sara E. Meléndez and Janice Petrovich, "Hispanic Women Students in Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge of Diversity," in *Educating the Majority: Women Challenge Tradition in Higher Education*, edited by Carol S. Pearson, Donna Shavlik, and Judith Touchton (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education/Macmillan Series on Higher Education), 1989). See also the synthesis of the symposium "The Educational Experience of Hispanic American Women" (Claremont, Calif.: Tomás Rivera Center, 1991). The outcome of this symposium led to the publication of Teresa McKenna and Flora Ida Ortiz, *The Broken Web: The Educational Experience of Hispanic American Women* (Claremont, Calif.: Tomás Rivera Center and Floricanto Press, 1988).
38. Keller et al., *Assessment and Access*.
  39. Adelaida Del Castillo, Jeanie Frederickson, Teresa McKenna, and Flora Ida Ortiz, "An Assessment of the Status of the Education of Hispanic American Women," in McKenna and Ortiz, *The Broken Web*, 7–8.
  40. Johnsrud and Des Jarlais, "Barriers to Tenure for Women and Minorities."
  41. *Ibid.*, 337.
  42. See Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organization from an Orderly Universe* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1992), in which she discusses how "We have even drawn boundaries around the flow of experience, thus shaping the way we think about the world. For example, we are conditioned to think of reality in terms of variables," 28.
  43. Personal communication from Mexican researcher, field notes, 1989. A similar observation on race is made by Clara E. Rodriguez with regard to Puerto Ricans in New York. From her research, she raises the need to reconsider the concept of race in its U.S. understanding and how it is used by Puerto Ricans and other Latinos, particularly if they identify as "other Spanish" in high numbers (more than 48 percent in her study). In the United States, race is "a) an ascribed characteristic which is unchanging and generally agreed upon, and b) a physical or genotypical characteristic of individuals which is often seen in dichotomous terms, that is, as White or non-White," 377. Race appears to be as much a social as a racial term reflecting the fusion of culture as well as identity assertion. See Clara Rodriguez, "Racial Classification among Puerto Rican Men and Women in New York," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 12, no. 4 (November 1990): 366–379.
  44. Personal communication from Mexican-American researcher, field notes, 1989.
  45. See Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983).
  46. The literature on women in academe is replete with the types of psychological and political dilemmas women in general face between their nurturing and caring role, which is often taken advantage of, and their autonomous, independent role, which they ascribe to a male-oriented academic world. Janet L. Miller describes such a dilemma in "The Resistance of Women Academics: An Autobiographical Account," in *Contemporary Curriculum Discourse*, ed. William Pinar (Tucson: Gorush, Scarisbrick Publishers, 1988), 486–494. However, a Latina academic's not only belonging to an underrepresented group but also being a woman places her in double jeopardy. This situation may be even more difficult for black Latina academicians who may experience triple jeopardy in being a woman, being ignored as a Latina, and being identified solely on the basis of skin color.
  47. Personal communication from Puerto Rican teacher educator, field notes, 1992.

48. According to Judith Blomberg, in the American Association of School and Administrators survey of women, in comparison with nonminority women, underrepresented women feel the effects of race and ethnic bias on participation in their jobs. See J. Blomberg, "Diversity among Female Aspirants to Educational Administration: An Examination of Perceived Barriers to Advancement," *Research on Women and Education*, 12th Annual Conference, Diversity Among Women: Implications for Education, 1986.
49. This situation is also quite different for black Latinas, who are identified for affirmative action purposes under the rubric of black faculty/administrator or Hispanic faculty/administrator or both.
50. G. Anzaldua, "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers," in Moraga and Anzaldua, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 166.
51. Personal communication from Honduran researcher/consultant, field notes, 1993.
52. The issue of first name usage has traditionally been employed throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to signal status differences between the *patrón* (landowner) and the peon (worker). The *patrón* referred to the worker by first name, and the peon referred to the landowner as Mr. X or Don Arturo. While the formal *usted* between persons is normally enforced, as titles and use of formal Spanish have given way to modernization and informality, the use of first names has become more widespread in some areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. In fact, *tutear* — using the informal "you" — is commonplace and an accepted form of communication signifying greater intimacy. It is used among Caribbean peoples and those who know one another or have acknowledged the use of *tu*. Thus, being on a first-name basis with a teacher changes status role differences and creates a sense of intimacy that is usually shared with those you know well. Within the academic circles of Latin America, deference and respect for authority and age demand formal usage of titles and names. Hence professors are referred to in terms of their titles and degrees, for example, *el licenciado Rodriguez*, *Doctora Mendoza*, or *Profesor Moreno*. Among same-age peers or colleagues, the use of the first name and the informal *tu* or *vos* instead of *usted* is widespread and connotes equal membership.
53. In rural areas of Latin America, physical punishment by teachers may be condoned by parents, as in their minds it enforces their own authority. Punishment may be accrued for not knowing one's lessons or misbehaving; at the higher education level, expressions of negative reinforcement by professors to mold the students through public display may be regarded as acceptable.
54. Personal communication from Argentine faculty member, field notes, 1985.
55. The majority of the women I surveyed for this article commented about the frequency with which they were asked if they understood a presentation, especially if they remained silent throughout. Several noted that other faculty would respond to them by speaking slowly or simply asking what they understood.
56. Examples occur when a young Latina in higher education includes the family in the decisions for her career options. Within the U.S. context, this is an individual's prerogative, but among many Latinos, the power of your decision carries social consequences that affect the family or group as well.
57. For some of the Puerto Rican women, particularly those from the island, saying the *ay bendito*, meaning "Oh my God," or "Holy God," offers a degree of psychological respite from the hardships of daily life. Yet the *ay bendito* also refers to "Life is so hard" or even "Woe is me" and demands pity from those who are in better straits. That is why some Puerto Ricans may respond to the *bendito* with remarks such as *pobrecito* or



*pobrecita*, "poor helpless one." So the *ay bendito* can be used to excuse a person from social obligations since he or she may be acting as a victim.

58. H. T. Trueba, "Mentoring," *SIGUE*, newsletter of the Hispanic Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association, Winter 1988.
59. Personal communication from Mexican-American faculty member, field notes, 1980.
60. Finkelstein, *The American Academic Profession*; Chamberlain, *Women in Academe*.
61. Among one of the most common expressions of this homogeneity reported by nearly all the Latinas was the frequency with which they were addressed at meetings or conferences as "Maria," particularly when people did not remember their names and "Maria" seemed to fit.
62. T. Herrera Escobedo, "Are Hispanic Women in Higher Education the Nonexistent Minority?" *Educational Researcher* 9, no. 9 (1980).
63. Personal communication from Puerto Rican researcher, field notes, 1983.
64. For an extended discussion of the academic rituals surrounding Chicanos in higher education, see María de los Reyes and John H. Halcón, "Racism in Academia: The Wolf Revisited," *Harvard Educational Review* (1988): 299-314.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, 303-308.
67. *Ibid.*, 309-310.
68. Personal communication from Puerto Rican researcher educator, field notes, 1991.
69. Personal communication from Chicana researcher, field notes, 1982.
70. Personal communication from Mexican educator, field notes, 1993; Stepford wives syndrome refers to the title of a movie, *The Stepford Wives*, in which all the women in a town have been brainwashed to act nicely toward their often abusive husbands.
71. Adela de la Torre and Beatriz M. Pesquera, *Building with Our Own Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).
72. Roberto Rodriguez, "Latina Feminists Carving an Institutional Niche in Academe," *Black Issues in Higher Education* 10 (1993): 26-28.
73. See, for example, the literary work of Isabel Allende, Elena Poniatowska, Domitila Barrios de Chugara, Rigoberta Menchu.
74. B. Smith and B. Smith, "Across the Kitchen Table: A Sister to Sister Dialogue," in Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 61.
75. Puerto Rican women's oral histories derived from their experiences within adult education programs have been compiled in the El Barrio Popular Education Program by Rina Benmayor, Pedro Pedraza, and Rosa Torruelas of the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College.
76. J. Moschkovich, "But I Know You, American Woman," in Moraga and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*, 83.

77. Ibid.
78. L. Stoner, "Directions in Latin American Women's History, 1977-1984," *Latin American Research Review* 22, no. 2 (1987): 109.
79. Ibid.
80. See the publications of *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender of the National Association for Chicano Studies* (CMAS Publications, 1986), and de la Torre and Pesquera, *Building with Our Own Hands*, as examples of this expanding literature.
81. de la Torre and Pesquera, *Building with Our Own Hands*, 6.
82. One of the organizations credited with pioneering Latina feminist scholarship is Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS), founded in 1981.
83. Rodriguez, *Latina Feminists Carving an Institutional Niche*, 26.
84. Nieves-Squires, *Hispanic Women*, and B. Sandler and R. Hall, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women? Project on the Status of Women* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1986).
85. M. Olivas, "Trout Fishing in Catfish Ponds," in *Minorities in Graduate Education: Pipeline, Policy, and Practice*, edited by Jessie Jones et al. (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1992).
86. Ibid.
87. Johnsrud and Des Jarlais also concur with Michael Olivas about the use of qualitative research to indicate collective perceptions about the roles of ethnically underrepresented faculty at predominantly white faculty institutions.
88. Chapa, "Special Focus."
89. C. Maitland, "The Inequitable Treatment of Women Faculty in Higher Education," in *Women in Higher Education*, ed. Lynn B. Welch (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1990), 253.
90. *Hispanics in Higher Education in Connecticut* is a good example of a state organization that has successfully overturned tenure denial for several faculty.
91. According to Roberto P. Haro and Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr., "Few Latino Faculty, Officials Hired by UC, Cal State," *Crosstalk*, California Higher Education Policy Center, October 1994, "As of December 1993, there were only 198 Hispanics among the 4,936 tenured faculty at the 8 UC undergraduate campuses. In the entire UC system, there are only 36 tenured Latina faculty, and two intend to retire before the end of this year. At the nine UC campuses, Latino faculty are increasing at a rate of twelve hundredths of one percent annually. At this rate of 'progress,' Latino faculty will approximate 1990 population parity in the year 2175."

*“Most Puerto Ricans, unlike blacks and Mexicans, face the extreme social ills of the urban ghetto daily. These areas offer little protection against family instability and school decline, and one consequence may be poor educational outcomes.”*

*— Katherine M. Donato  
Roger A. Wojtkiewicz*