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NAVIGATING BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

The Labyrinth of Chicana Intellectual Production in the Academy

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Undergirded by a theoretical framework, which focuses on the important role of social context, this article focuses primarily on the cultural, institutional, and individual factors explaining how Chicanas fare in academia. To what extent are the experiences of Chicanas exemplary in suggesting similar issues for African-American, Asian, and American Indian women? What strategies have Chicanas employed to help them negotiate the new and ever-changing aspects of academic life? Based on research with 30 Chicana faculty, this article provides compelling answers to these important but unanswered questions.

Keywords: *Chicanas; Mexican American women; women faculty; women in higher education; minority women; affirmative action; tokenism; otherness; hidden workload*

Few Chicanas have gained access to faculty positions in the academy or leadership in crafting the nation's intellectual agenda.¹ Today, less than 1% of all full-time faculty teaching in institutions of higher education are Latina.² Only 0.4% of full professors are Latina, 0.7% are associate professors, and 1.3% are assistant professors (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). These statistics give one indication of the narrow representation offered by public institutions of higher education. These figures also point to structural contradictions within the university that undermine its mission to explore a broad and lively range of questions that inspire theoretical and empirical knowledge across a diverse cultural and social land-

scape. The need for broad intellectual agendas—especially those that can inform policy formulations—is particularly urgent when we consider the rise of new cultural, social, and economic formations associated with globalization and demographic changes.

Chicanas are members of a group in the middle of many of these changes. Although few in number, their intellectual work broadens and informs interdisciplinary scholarship and is making inroads into the discourse of mainstream disciplines as well. Norma Alarcón (1990) asserted that

the feminist Chicana, activist, writer, scholar and intellectual has to on the one hand locate the point of theoretical and political consensus with other feminists (and “feminist” men), and on the other continue with projects that position her in paradoxical binds. For example, breaking out of ideological boundaries that subject her in culturally specific ways and not crossing over to cultural and political areas that subject her as “individual/autonomous/neutralized” laborer. (p. 254)

What Alarcón is pointing to is what we in sociology would call “Chicana agency” and what she as a critical social theorist calls being “agent provocateurs.”

This article explores the intellectual work of Chicana faculty as one expression of a community praxis forged in the nexus of daily life engagements with family, university, and the larger community. Specifically, I explore Chicana agency in the academy among their 0.4%, 0.7%, and 1.3% proportion of the professorate, as mentioned earlier, that has secured spaces in environments where they are typically solo or token hires. I ask, What are the structural and interpersonal barriers Chicanas encounter in the academy to their intellectual and political work? And, How do Chicana faculty wrest an empowered self from environments historically vested in a Eurocentric, male normative ordering of work, productivity, and merit? I explore these questions, in-depth, within the narratives of four Chicana feminist intellectuals (out of a larger study of 30 Chicana faculty) chosen for their distinct academic environments.

My exploration reveals that Chicana faculty are academic “others” whose social expressions of race-ethnicity, class, gender, and/

or sexuality include a commitment to engage in counterhegemonic intellectual production that challenges the Eurocentric masculinist text of their respective disciplines. In this struggle, Chicanas reclaim a politicized self-anchor in a community praxis. Interrogating this engagement reveals the subtle discrimination that occurs in the workplace and discloses the hidden injuries of class, race-ethnicity, gender, and the strategic oppositional consciousness Chicanas evoke to develop an empowered praxis from an institutionally alienating subtext.

I begin with a literature review that theorizes the social context of the academy and the barriers to access, attachment, and mobility Chicanas encounter. This sets the stage for my analysis of Chicana survival and their praxis in higher education.

There are a number of explanations for this disparity in access and representation—including institutional racism and sexism in the public school system, class background, familial constraints, and culture. I briefly review some of the literature on barriers to Chicanas in higher education to contextualize the subtext of opportunity (or its lack thereof) in higher education.

THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

This study of Chicana agency in higher education begins by identifying the historically specific structural conditions constraining women's experiences. Zavella (1991) stated "We can then link these conditions to the varieties of ways in which women respond to and construct subjective representations of their experiences" (p. 74). My analysis draws on theories of segmented labor that delineate the processes whereby women, in general, and women of color, in particular, become occupationally segregated into lower paying, lower status administrative support, clerical, and service occupations. Historically situated in the working class and subjected to systemic racial-ethnic oppression, Chicanas tend to be concentrated in poor neighborhoods that are often racially segregated and attend schools that rarely prepare them for college (Gonzalez, 1996). Chicanas in more ethnically diverse suburban schools

tend to have a bimodal educational experience outside of the academic world of gifted and talented education (GATE) and advanced placement (AP) curriculum.³ Few Chicanas who complete higher education pursue doctorates. In 1995-96, 2.7% of all Ph.D.s awarded nationwide went to Hispanic women (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). When Chicanas complete their Ph.D.s, they enter a labor market hierarchically organized along class, race, and gender lines.

The academic environment provides few examples of successful and competent women of color receiving respect and recognition from their institutions, their departments, their peers, and their students. Feminist academics have theorized about gender relations in the organization of social institutions in general, and higher education in particular, that limit women's entry and mobility. In general, the academic environment assumes the "male experience as normative" (Conway, 1989, p. 636). Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen Moglen (1987) argued that "women have been outsiders in the academy: marginal as students, teachers and administrators" (p. 494). Research indicates women have different ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), different styles of interaction, communication (Tannen, 1990), and relationality (Cancian, 1987). Thus, women often bring different things to their disciplines, universities, and students (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). Goetting (1995) noted that "often these differences were not well-received" (p. 4), particularly from women of color.

Class background is another important subtext awaiting Chicana postulants in the academy. Jake Ryan and Charles Sackrey's (1984) *Strangers in Paradise: Academics from the Working Class* describes the effects prior class segmentation plays in social mobility within elite, intellectual environments. Among the "hidden injuries of class" are alienation and internalizing "the conflicts in the hierarchy of the class system within the individual, upwardly mobile person" (Ryan & Sackrey, 1984, p. 5). Their analysis of White, working-class men in the academy reveal their "sense of separateness from the academic community, of being a stranger distanced from an authentic sense of self, and also from one's past, the cultural network of earlier life" (Ryan & Sackrey, 1984, p. 75).

White, working-class men experiencing social and psychological disjuncture from the academy in ways that approach the experiences of women and Chicana academics speaks to the significance of class in shaping social relations and institutional boundaries.

More recently, research—largely by women of color—interrogates gender and class differences as racially gendered class projects socially constructed and contested (e.g., “A special issue,” 1999; Hurtado, 1996; Lim & Herrera-Sobek, 2000). This work analyzes the context of opportunity for women of color academics, in particular, important changes in the structure of higher education that mitigate against the access and promotion of minorities, in particular Chicanas, to tenure-track positions, that is, higher education is downsizing as part-time and adjunct instructor positions slowly but steadily replace full-time faculty. For example, in 1995, 41% of all faculty positions were part-time compared to 22% in 1970. The growth of part-time work creates significant competition for the best full-time jobs. At the same time that the full-time faculty workforce has been constricting, more women and minorities have been obtaining Ph.D.s. But who is getting the good jobs? Between 1981 and 1991, the number of full-time faculty grew by 54,247 with women garnering 32,579 of the new positions. Nearly all these women (88%) were White women. Although White women have arguably been the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action in higher education hiring, the debate over affirmative action in academic hiring has been largely framed in terms of race (Bramen, 2000).

Carrie Tirado Bramen’s (2000) entrance into the world of the academy is an instructive example of the racially gendered subtext of the academy. The April 27, 1994 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported: “He is white. She is half Chicana. He had one job interview. She had fourteen [interviews] and four offers” (S. Heller as cited in Bramen, 2000, p. 112). Bramen countered:

It doesn’t take a PhD in English to realize how we were made to signify, namely that my husband did not find a tenure-track job because he is white and that I found employment because my mother is Chicana. The article makes no mention that I work in two fields of

study, late-nineteenth-century American and contemporary multicultural literature, which are considered valid by the academy, while my husband's work is not. (p. 112)

Bramen's story points to how racially gendered signifiers are deployed in describing diversity in academic hiring with predictable results: Bramen received hate mail that conflated her hiring with an indictment of affirmative action. This conflation of the individual with the institutional not only removes agency from Chicana subjects but also reintroduces a racial subtext into the larger social oratory surrounding diversity, demographic change, and higher education.

In California, the debate surrounding the passage of SP-1 & SP-2 by the University of California Regents and Proposition 209 by the electorate deployed racial imageries and strategies.⁴ The rancor of the racialized debate holds Chicanas hostage to assaults on their scholarly qualifications.

Within the context of an increasingly bifurcated labor market, Chicanas' participation in intellectual work include tokenism, the typecasting syndrome, differential standards, and a racially gendered hidden workload.⁵ In addition, there are other constraints (particularly in workplace relations) that often limit Chicana attachment to academic jobs (Niemann, 2000). Another institutional dilemma Chicanas often experience in academia is their commitment to research areas that are innovative and still developing, including such interdisciplinary studies as Chicana/o studies, ethnic studies, women's studies, or cultural studies.

Other constraints revolve around the family/work interface. Traditional Chicano/Mexicano culture places a high premium on motherhood. Chicanas, like other women engaged in mothering, face potent barriers in an academic publish or perish work world. Reconciling the competing urgencies of family and work are particularly difficult in situations where a women is a racially gendered token or solo subject.⁶ These structural and interpersonal constraints form the social context and locations for Chicana academic otherness where Chicana faculty can and do create their own ways of being.

What does it mean to be an academic other? Otherness is often spoken of as difference—a source of insight, and thus, of power (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Perez, 1999; Sandoval, 1991; Zavella, 1991). Patricia Zavella (1991) observed that a broader intellectual agenda is emerging (particularly in feminist scholarship) that problematizes the historical privileging of the concerns of White, middle-class, or heterosexual women rather than assuming the experiences of these women to be the norm. She argued that this broader intellectual agenda arises from the struggle of women seen as the other. Speaking from the margins offers critical insight into the social order and, as such, is an important tool to contest hegemony. This leads to the larger question: How is an empowered (or reflexive, self-conscious politicized) otherness socially constructed, maintained, and invoked?

I argue that Chicanas' otherness is a socially constructed synthesis of their social and intellectual distance from the Eurocentric masculinist professorial center of their departments and the marginality of their disciplinary discourse from the intellectual centers of the established canon. Chicana otherness is intensified in those instances when they are engaged in building an alternative institutional apparatus within the university hierarchy (e.g., Chicana/o studies, ethnic studies, women's studies, or cultural studies). A Chicana scholar in a mainstream department encounters a canon bounded by specific theoretical hierarchies and empirical methodologies that form the lens through which her work is evaluated and assigned value. In this environment, gaining academic value can be a formidable challenge, particularly when the Chicana scholar is engaged in emerging research on her community that departs from the established canon. Engaging in the struggle for legitimacy and to reshape traditional notions of value reaffirms a Chicana's otherness.

In interdisciplinary departments, the canon is usually more fluid, but the environments tend to be politically charged given their origins in sustained student, faculty, and community involvement. Chicana faculty in this type of environment engage in struggle for

survival on several fronts. They struggle for the legitimacy of the department as well as for a space for their own intellectual production. Their space within the academy tends to be as strong or as tenuous as that of their (usually small) department, which is itself integrally bound to larger political or systemic considerations. Hence, the social context for Chicana intellectual agency and otherness is distinctly politicized within interdisciplinary departments.

Whether in mainstream or interdisciplinary departments, Chicanas' classed and racially gendered otherness is rarely erased. What I have found in my interviews is that Chicanas actively nurture their otherness in ways that synchronize their diverse social locations (heterosexual, lesbian, married without children, married with children, and single parent). This self-consciously crafted state is anchored in the intellectual work that they have had to defend and their commitment to a counterhegemonic praxis.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

In this article, I present excerpts from the narratives of four Chicana faculty. All were interviewed in 1998 to 2000. I have selected them from a larger group of 30 women interviewed by Beatriz Pesquera and myself for a larger study on Chicana political consciousness that incorporates 101 Chicanas involved in higher education as faculty or graduate students (Segura & Pesquera, 2002). Among the 30 faculty women, about 50% work in public research universities that grant Ph.D.s; about 30% work in public universities and colleges that do not grant Ph.D.s; with the others in private, liberal arts colleges. Most work in California, with smaller numbers in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Michigan. All the women are tenured. About 15% are full professors. Beatriz and I explored with our colleagues questions of political consciousness, educational and work experiences, sexuality, family, and social activism. This article focuses on their experiences in higher education.

IRENE

Irene is an associate professor in a mainstream social science department at a research university in the southwest. She has held this position for a number of years. Like most of the women we interviewed, Irene is bilingual in English and Spanish. She's 50-ish, lesbian, and happily partnered. She does not have children. Irene is a first-generation college graduate who was encouraged to pursue her educational dreams by her parents, in particular, her father. Parental support is one common thread throughout Chicanas' narratives, although this support tended to be moral rather than material. Virtually none of the parents could help their daughters do schoolwork or advise them regarding college careers. Few could offer much financial support given their own tenuous hold on economic survival.

Irene grew up in a border city. She believes that her family's upwardly mobile move from a working-class Chicano/Mexican area to a more middle-class Anglo area helped her to acquire important negotiating and coping skills:

In the midst of my high school years we moved from the area where I grew up which was primarily Mexican closer to the high school where I had been bussed, which was only about 30 or 35% Mexican. When we moved I was able to see my friends from the old area. And least in my mind, that helped me accommodate these competing worlds. Kind of what might have been as an Anglo-defined academic world versus a Chicano working-class world. And I thought, I was pleased that I could, I thought to some extent, that I could navigate between the two.

Irene's experience calls to mind what Pamela Roby (1995) calls a "mixed-class" experience, that is, she experienced a move out of a working-class Chicano barrio to a better neighborhood close to the high school to which Chicano kids were bussed. Because she was able to keep connected with her working-class Chicano friends alongside establishing new relationships outside of this network, the mixed-class and race experience encouraged her to develop social and coping skills that would be valuable later to survive in a world with few Chicana/o and working-class inhabitants.

Even though Irene was an excellent student in high school, she did not receive counseling help to select and apply for college. This is another common theme that poses serious barriers to college preparation and applications by Chicanos today (Gandara, 1996). Irene received help from friends to negotiate the nettlesome undergraduate terrain. She went on to a prestigious graduate school after which she secured a tenure-track position in a small, liberal arts college. After several years, she received a job offer in a more prestigious research university where she now teaches.

Irene shared with us myriad dilemmas associated with being solo in her department:

I'm frustrated about the continual obstacles or pressures on us as Chicana academics. I have a love/hate relationship with my discipline . . . [. . .] . I resent the fact that I'm still undervalued, that is, in dealing with the same old criteria. . . . we have managed to change things, but there are still the same old values, and I get so frustrated and get so tired of it . . . the guys who are getting promoted are the good old White boys who are the entrepreneurs. And I see it repeated over and over and over and now, it's now White girls who are entrepreneurs. Those things are weighing on me now.

Irene, like all of the women we interviewed, emphasize the raced, classed, gendered, and sexually hierarchical ordering of the university. Irene emphasizes her struggle over the definition of "value" in a department that adheres to traditional criteria for promotion. Irene refers to the type of research she does as well as the significant service work she engages in for the university and local community.

Annette Kolodny (2000), a former humanities dean at the University of Arizona, concurred that women and minorities in the academy are significantly disadvantaged by the often unfamiliar research areas they are involved in as well as the hidden workload:

Many women and minority scholars have been drawn to the academy by the interest in subject areas that are innovative and still developing . . . while these scholars' work adds substantially to the creation of new knowledge, both their research materials and their experimental methodologies can be unfamiliar to senior depart-

mental colleagues who abide comfortably entrenched in more orthodox approaches. In too many cases, unfamiliarity breeds contempt (or even worse, suspicion and devaluation). (p. 86-87)

Numerous studies have documented that minority and women faculty tend to spend more time on student advising and in office hours than White male colleagues. In addition, because many women of color are solo hires in their departments and numerically few in the university, they tend to be tapped far more often than the more numerous White male faculty for committee assignments. It is often impossible for Chicanas to “just say no” to these requests. They are in a classic no-win scenario: If they say yes, they endanger their research and publication records—the traditionally valued work of the university; if they say no, they weaken their connection to the strong sense of political mission that fuels their academic integrity. This distinctive situation forms part of their otherness in the university that Chicanas are held accountable for by the institution, by themselves, and by their communities.

The impact of their multiple missions in the university places Chicanas at high risk for either not being promoted or being promoted more slowly than other faculty. Irene said: “I do want to be a full professor. At this point I don’t know if I’m gonna be a full professor. You know, at this point, I don’t give a shit. I really don’t.”

Irene also discussed another unique barrier many Chicanas in the academy encounter but rarely discuss in published form: intraethnic politics (or Chicana/o political terrorism). She said, “In terms of Chicano or Chicana academic politics within academia? I can’t stand it anymore. I can’t stand it anymore. I have better battles to wage. I would like us to begin to address public policy issues for the larger community.” Later, she added, “Our community is crying for our expertise—that’s where I come down. And I’m sick. I’m sick of this grandstanding posture of turning Chicano students against us for absolutely no apparently good reason. I’m sick of the divisiveness. . . . I don’t have time to deal with that—we’ve gotta move on.”

Ultimately, Irene absorbs the pressure to navigate across different worlds of the academy and the community and recrafts it into a meaningful community praxis:

We've got work to do. We may not be prolific, but we contribute in different ways. I still have hope that I can maybe put together an institute for community organizers . . . I also would like to interface with our state legislators, out public policy makers. I think I'm good! We, a few of us were able to get a few policies done regarding immigrant kids' rights to education in [.]. We worked with the INS, actually protested, but subsequently, worked out some negotiating differences there. Those are the kinds of things that I'm ready [for], that I think we ought to be doing.

GLORIA

Gloria, an assistant professor who was up for tenure when she was interviewed, is 40-ish, lesbian, and happily partnered without children. She teaches in a research university in an interdisciplinary studies department. Gloria (who now has tenure) has experienced much of what Irene has in the general campus environment. However, with a home base outside of a mainstream department, she does not feel the same pressure to validate traditional methodological and theoretical claims. Gloria emphasized the relatively privileged status Chicanas enjoy in the academy and articulates the need to build a body of research around Chicanas. She sees this kind of research as the ultimate insurgent act and one that forms her praxis:

It's very ironic because you and I have a privileged position as Chicanas if we see ourselves in the context of our struggles. But in the academy, when White men [are] still on top and then White women and then we on the bottom, you know what I mean? We're still fucked up; we don't have no privilege. [laughs] We're back in the field. So these contradictions, you know, we have to define the Chicana in the academy.

Gloria speaks to the insurgent voices of Chicanas in the academy who are dedicated to crafting an environment that expands the pur-

view of the traditional canon and values that Irene (and much of the scholarly feminist literature) critique. Gloria recognized that the class, race, gender, and sexual hierarchies within the university are potent forces and that Chicanas are in a sense working in the fields of intellectual labor. Not only are they lower ranking academic field-workers, their hidden labor in crafting new fields and their extensive community service (which is not only unrewarded, but often penalized) subsidizes the university because it is labor that is extracted without monetary recompense.

Gloria emphasized the diversity and heterogeneity among Chicana intellectuals:

Our community is so diverse. And if you just deal with the Chicana intellectual, Chicana academic, the Chicana body—let's talk about the Chicana body. How can we describe the epistemology of the Chicana body? You know, who IS that body? You know we cannot speak of that body as unique—it's a composition of many different perspectives, ideas. You know, the hy-breeds of the hybridity embedded in the body are amazing! If we describe who's really the Chicana body, who's the Chicana, it's a body that moves in and out between spaces, between—it goes from the third-world consciousness and third world in a first world. We cannot avoid either one. We go back and forth. I mean we are dominated by a first world. I mean the university as academics. And again, I speak as an academic because you know I mean I was working class. We both were working class; we were students once. But right now our positions as academics and professors, you know, really puts [us] in a very privileged position—totally different than my *tía* or your relative that is working still in the fields. They don't know anything about Chicanas. They don't even want to START with Chicanas. They don't even say—they think we're crazy!

In her own unique voice, Gloria proposed the creation of new epistemologies and theoretical models that articulate diverse realities among Chicanas and people historically marginalized in this society. Her self-conscious deconstruction of the so-called Chicana body is carefully attentive to class differences among Chicanas but is anchored in a strong sense of its distinctiveness from other groups. This socially constructed otherness is a source of strength for Gloria and also forms the core of her intellectual work in the

university. Gloria problematizes her social location as part of the Chicana body in the academy. She argued that claiming Chicana and doing Chicana are critical markers of their socially constructed otherness. Gloria stated:

I think that one of the things that we have to do as Chicanas . . . as intellectuals as the so-called Chicanas that we call ourselves—how can we use our own, you know, our own powers—if we have some—to reach our communities. And we can take a message, “I’m here. I’m a Chicana. Now let me explain to you why I’m a Chicana.” You know if I explain to a group of people they haven’t even—they don’t KNOW what a Chicana is. And you explain, “I’m a Chicana. I became a Chicana when I went to college.” Nobody is born a Chicana. You BECOME because it’s an ideology, right?

For Gloria, and other women we interviewed, claiming and doing Chicana are critical to their identity in the academy. These women share a sense of belonging to a political ideology of struggle for the betterment of *Raza* [Latinos], of the larger Chicana/o and Latina/o community in the United States and abroad. Whereas in the past, race and class tended to be emphasized in the narratives of struggle, Chicana intellectuals and activists (including Gloria and Irene) adamantly locate gender and sexuality in that nexus. Gloria, as a faculty member up for tenure, is trying to keep focused on her research but expects to be more active in these issues once she secures tenure. She indicated that the work of faculty who are lesbians can be misinterpreted in negative ways if they stray out of a well-defined intellectual and political territory. As lesbians, they are held accountable to communities who are often at odds with one another. The contours of the institutional and personal negotiations Chicana lesbians engage in reinforces their social otherness, diversifies our understanding of the Chicana body, and ultimately forms a unique community praxis.

ESTELA

Estela is in her mid-40s, heterosexual, married without children, and works as a tenured professor in a mainstream health sciences

department in a state college system. Her father was a farmworker, and she was raised in a family of six children. Like Irene and Gloria, Estela was raised according to traditional gender values privileging motherhood, virginity, and sacrifice. She was a bright, intelligent child, and her family encouraged her to do well in school. When it came to go to college, however, Estela stated:

When it got to my senior year and I found myself at the top of my class with a scholarship and a valedictorian position, I applied to several schools. At this point my mother confronted me one day, and she had never spoken about it. And she said, "You know what? You're not going to college because you don't need to go to college. It's just simply not a woman's place to go to college. You might lose your virginity." This is how we got talking about my virginity. "You might, after all, lose your virginity and of course that would make you worthless." Well, I thought about that and I said, "You know I really want to go to college." So, dammit, on July 4,—I went up and I lost my virginity with my boyfriend because I thought well, if I lose it then let's get it over with NOW. I was going to start school that fall. And the way I looked at it, well, let's get rid of it now because I don't want it to hold me back and if this thing is so important, well, let's get it over and done with and let's not worry about it anymore. So, I did it.

Estela's confrontation with the gender standards favored by her family and community is not unique among the women we interviewed. Although her married state would suggest significant conformity to these standards, Estela, like many of the women we interviewed, does not adhere to a traditional marriage script with her husband. In addition, she does not have children. She views this status as an opportunity to deconstruct the "Chicana body" (to quote Gloria) and the social construction of motherhood in the Latino community: "I'm not a mother and I can't understand all this mother crap that Mexicans have. You know, this worship-the-mother crap. Now I love my mother, but she's not God. She's no goddess. She's a human being with problems."

Estela's critique of the motherhood motif (Fregoso, 1993) in the Latina/o community resonates across our informants. Other women tend to express their critiques of the sociocultural construc-

tion of Chicana/Latina motherhood in less forceful terms. Unlike Estela, the married heterosexual women we interviewed tend to express great anguish over their inability to meet the cultural expectations of mothering.

Estela is also somewhat unusual in choosing to dedicate herself to a career in health sciences. Her department also has a significant presence of women faculty. For Estela, the pathway to academic success has been strategic alliances with other women, primarily White women faculty: "I feel a very strong sense of kinship to other women. And not necessarily just Hispanic women, but just to all women in general and this has been really empowering." This high sense of gender solidarity was integral to Estela's survival but did not come easily:

I think that people [were] afraid of me. You know, you have a 24-year old Hispanic kid coming in here and playing professor. I think a lot of people saw me as an upstart—and how dare I aspire to so much? And, how dare I succeed at such a young age? I'm surprised that I survived. I'm not sure I can enumerate the processes that I went through. But I know that a lot of it had to do with my reaching out and finding support and finding people . . . allies, if you will.

It's important to note that Estela secured a job in a system that did not require a completed Ph.D. to be a professor.

Estela, like Irene, discussed intraethnic conflict but sees it as sexism that has a negative impact on her community:

I have come across a great deal of sexism. And I have made the statement that no one discriminates against a Hispanic woman more than a Hispanic man. That's angered a lot of people especially when I say it around Hispanic men. But in this community when I have gone out and tried to do my research and tried to talk to the leaders who are men, the so-called leaders of Hispanics in this city, who are men, I have run across a lot of attitudes. They look at me—and I won't mention any names . . . like "who do you think you are to want to do research on the Hispanic community?" I don't have the credibility in their eyes to go out and do research on the health of Hispanic women and the socioeconomic and psychological variables that affect our health! But you know what? I go about and I do my work despite that anyway. But that was very disconcerting.

Estela spoke to a problem that many of the women articulate: the role of Latino men in the academy and in the community as intellectual and political gatekeepers. She does not assume a victim standpoint to the barriers men pose to her work. Rather, she viewed the struggle to overcome these barriers contributes to her social construction of an empowered Chicana other.

I think it's the struggle; the process of the struggle that finally raises one's consciousness and empowers you to live your life despite . . . Nothing about my circumstances has really changed but I've changed, my perception has changed, and the way I go about doing things has changed. . . . And I think how I see my role as a role model, if you will, for Latinas and for all other young women. I try to teach them to be powerful.

Estela, like Irene and Gloria, views herself a political actor. One of a handful of Chicanas in the health sciences, she sees her survival in the state college system in political terms. Her sense of otherness comprises a heightened gender solidarity reinforced, in part by struggles with Latino men who have not been supportive of her research in the local Latina community.

ISELA

Isela is also in her mid-40s, single, heterosexual, and a full professor in an interdisciplinary studies department in a state college system. Her parents supported her educational dreams although their modest income did not allow them to provide help to her financially when she went away to college. In college, Isela was heavily involved in Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlàn Chicana/o Student Movement of Aztlàn (MECHA) and activist campus politics. She thrived academically because she was able to integrate her community concerns with her coursework. After college, Isela received a fellowship for graduate school. In graduate school, she got married but after several years divorced her husband. After receiving her Ph.D., Isela held a series of community advocacy and research jobs until being recruited by her current department.

Initially Isela felt that her situation in the state college affirmed her research, teaching, and advocacy work concerning questions of health issues in Chicano/Latino communities. In this system, advocacy work and community service are rewarded in merit and promotion. Isela is an accomplished grant writer and quickly established herself as a significant presence nationally as well as in her department. She was mentored by a couple of senior male Chicano faculty members who advised her well regarding tenure and promotion. After her promotion to full professor, Isela ran for chair of the department: "I felt it was absolutely necessary to do that. To role model leadership for young women. And, you can imagine how proud the young women were to see me in my role."

One motivation for Isela's decision to become department chair was to expand the department's gender and sexual diversity. Significant barriers reared up, however, to make this impossible:

I got really caught up in internal politics and internal divisions . . . two big camps . . . and I got identified with one camp by the other camp, and therefore it was really difficult for me. That, combined with being a young, new person who was interested in research, who was interested in promoting excellent teaching and all of that made it really difficult for me to make the kinds of changes I wanted. It was just too much resistance. I was going to hang in there.

Isela was offered a significant advancement opportunity at another college that she took because she believed she could effect greater changes on behalf of recruiting people of color to the campus across all levels: student, faculty, and staff. This position gave her valuable administrative experience that she hoped to translate into a more permanent job on behalf of her community values. When a deanship opened up at her home campus, Isela considered applying given her high-level administrative experience alongside her experience as chair of a major department. She was told she did not have enough relevant experience so she applied for a lower level, interim associate deanship. When the permanent position opened, she applied, but was denied the job. At the same time, she applied for a prestigious national fellowship which she received. She said,

I did both, because I knew that politically I probably wouldn't get the associate dean position. And you know why? Too many Mexicans. The college could not handle a Chicano dean AND a Chicano associate dean. The majority of the people in that college is still the White faculty. They are the voters. Chicano Studies faculty don't attend; don't vote. So I knew the position. I didn't get an interview. And they made all these reasons why I wasn't qualified for the office, for a position I had done perfectly well for an entire year. Again I really think that the bottom line is that they didn't—the college did not want two Chicanos in a leadership role.

Isela's experience calls to mind what Reyes and Halcon (1997) called "the one-minority per pot syndrome" (p. 429), that is, institutional boundaries open up irregularly for token inclusion that has the effect of maintaining a meritocratic hiring myth without seriously eroding White male privilege in the administrative ranks. Whether Isela's rejection by the campus administration signified illegal race-gender bias will be adjudicated. Regardless of the outcome, this event can dampen the aspirations of minority scholars in the academy. Because Isela knows this, and because of her community-based praxis, she refuses to accept her rejection quietly.

Isela's intellectual and community praxis centers on diversifying the curriculum, Chicano/Latino health advocacy and a willingness to put her own well-being on the line to hold the academy accountable for representation beyond the norm. Like the other women interviewed, she is sustained by a sense of mission. She said, "I continue to advocate for other women in every way that I can, whenever I can. I am committed to being a role model to young women."

Nearly every Chicana we talked with spoke passionately and eloquently about their responsibility to be there for younger Chicanas. This part of the hidden workload is time-consuming and challenging, but one that cycles back and re-energizes the *veterana* (*veterana* is the Spanish word for veteran). However, the constant mentoring and advising, the massive unmet needs of Chicana representation, and the race-gender ceiling Chicanas encounter in the academy are almost overwhelming in their range and depth. Isela said at the end of her interview,

When you write this up, I would like you to emphasize how difficult the struggle has been. How bad I felt for many, many years. How guilty I felt. How isolated I felt. I would go to family functions and feel like a ghost because I did not fit in. It was just awful; it was really, really hard on me. And it took an awful lot of work to kind of deal with that. I think that you need to emphasize how hard it has been for ALL of us to break those traditions.

Isela's words remind us that Chicana academics are first generation in many ways. They are women who have achieved despite the institutionalized neglect of the schools; despite culturally gendered socialization that often privileges motherhood over academic achievement; despite tokenized entry and participation in academic departments; despite intraethnic cleavages and pressures to conform; and despite their desire to do it all. They have a sense of mission that forms one expression of their otherness in the institution deployed in a community-oriented praxis.

CONCLUSION

The case studies of the Chicana faculty profiled here reveal complex interrelationships between class, race-ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Each woman's narrative deconstructs perceptions of a singular or unified Chicana otherness. Moreover, the link between structure and agency is revealed in their particular struggles to survive in distinct locations in the academy. As a social construct, otherness is derived from the social situation and reflects power differentials and resistance.

Chicanas in this study entered the academy with a multidimensional mission: to challenge hegemonic discourse in their respective disciplines, articulate the needs of their diverse communities mindful of the danger of false representation, serve as role models for members of historically disenfranchised groups, and to contest racially gendered limitations imposed on their communities. By and large, they see themselves as agents of social change fighting for sustainable intellectual agendas.

As marginal members of mainstream departments, Chicana scholars craft scholarship that expands the discourse of their disciplines and challenges definitions of scholarly value. Chicanas in interdisciplinary departments struggle to legitimate departments marginalized in the university hierarchy and carve spaces for the intellectual work that nurture this struggle. Each setting creates the context for actualizing a unique social otherness anchored in struggle and the politics of community empowerment. From the struggle to survive in the academy they have articulated new understandings of the diverse Chicana body. To make sense of it all (as Anzaldúa [1987] would say) Chicanas have self-consciously created a diverse otherness from which they craft new intellectual and political agendas—praxis—to wrest meaning from the new context.

The challenges Chicanas face to access and survive in the academy will likely exacerbate with the restructuring and downsizing of the professoriate. We cannot forget that the academy is littered with the bodies of those who could not adapt or whose institutional configurations were not conducive to even token inclusion. Moreover, the narratives of the Chicanas in this article also demonstrate the existence of a racially gendered glass ceiling beyond which few may advance. Their stories have as much pain and anguish as they do empowerment and praxis.

Our challenge as socially conscious intellectual activists is to carefully consider the institutional and relational barriers Chicanas and other historically disenfranchised people experience in the academy with an eye to creating new ways of respecting difference and inclusion. If we can develop strategies to this end, Chicana faculty will not have shared their stories in vain.

NOTES

1. "Chicana" is a term that typically refers to U.S.-born women of Mexican descent or women born in Mexico who feel comfortable with the political connotations associated with the term, that is, the term, "Chicana/o" became a term to refer to by political activists during the 1970s. Since that time, other terms have become increasingly used, in particular "Latina/o." Readers may be more familiar with the term, "Hispanic," which is a term crafted by the

U.S. Bureau of the Census to refer to persons who claim descent from Spain or Latin America. For additional information on the politics of naming and claiming Chicana/o, see Segura, 2001.

2. In 1995, there were 551,000 full-time faculty positions and 381,000 (or 41%) part-time positions. In 1970, there were 369,000 full-time positions and 104,000 (22%) part-time positions. In 1995, there were 551,000 full-time faculty positions and 381,000 (41%) part-time positions. Of the full-time instructional faculty teaching in U.S. institutions of higher education in 1995, 468,518 were White and 69,505 (12.9%) were non-White or minority faculty. Most of the full-time faculty in the United States are men, but a growing number (now 34.6%) are women, most of whom are White (U. S. Department of Education, 1998). Of the 190,672 full-time women faculty in 1995, 14% are women of color, and only 2.6% are Latinas. In 1985, 27.6% of all full-time faculty were women; 0.5% were Latinas (U.S. Department of Education, 1990, Table 207).

3. GATE and AP classes offer advanced academic preparation for students. GATE and AP classes are weighted which means that an "A" is worth 5.0 points as opposed to the 4.0 points offered in regular academic courses. This difference is significant when students apply for college (particularly to the University of California and comparable systems) that rely heavily on student grade point averages in the construction of matrixes for admission. In California, the more AP and GATE classes a student takes, the higher their score on the admissions matrix. Students with few AP and GATE classes are significantly disadvantaged in admissions. GATE and AP courses tend to be restricted to students who pass certain tests. Occasionally, students may secure access to these classes by teacher or counselor recommendation. The existence of an academic curriculum that is restricted by tests/teacher recommendation alongside a regular college preparatory curriculum and noncollege preparatory curriculum for what I refer to as "bimodal" system of education. This system tends to reinforce existing differences in educational attainment by race-ethnicity and class.

4. On July 20, 1995, the Regents of the University of California adopted SP-1, a resolution that prohibited the consideration of race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin as criteria for admission to the university or any program of study, and SP-2, a resolution that prohibited the consideration of the same attributes in the university's employment and contracting practices. On November 6, 1996, the voters of California passed Proposition 209 that was incorporated into the California Constitution as Article 1, section 31. Proposition 209 mandates equal treatment without regard to race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin.

5. See Annette Kolodny's (2000) discussion of the hidden workload where she discusses the many ways that "women and minority faculty members repeatedly find themselves burdened with responsibilities that have never been demanded of their white male peers" (p. 87). Mentoring first-year women and minority colleagues, recruiting and mentoring women and minority graduate students including many outside their respective departments, spending more time advising students, being asked to serve on campus and departmental committees as part of the diversity operation of their institution, and renegotiating marginal status in the university to insert important new perspectives into the discussion are only some of the hidden workload of women and minority faculty. Kolodny, a former dean at the University of Arizona also argues that women are often held accountable to higher performance standards than male colleagues and experience difficulty in promotion and tenure reviews because of the nature of their work particularly when they are doing feminist theory or methodology. She asked: "How, for example, do we compare the archival recovery of a forgotten woman author and the most recent exegesis of a William Faulkner short story?" (p. 90). Maria de la Luz Reyes and John Halcon (1997) referred to the typecasting syndrome as the belief that

minorities should be hired to teach exclusively on minority issues, bilingual education, “foreign literatures,” etc.

6. My use of the terms *solo* and *token* draw on the work by Thomas Pettigrew and Joanne Martin (1987). In their analysis of the organizational context for African American inclusion, Pettigrew and Martin define: “A solo is a single Black individual in a group of Whites—In Kanter’s (1977) terms, an ‘X’ in a field of ‘O’s. More loosely, the term *solo* is used to refer to more than a single individual when there are relatively few Blacks in proportion to Whites in a given work group. Note that the solo concept carries no implications about the reasons why the solo was brought into the group. By contrast, the concept of token is used to indicate explicitly that the individual was included in part because of affirmative action considerations. Note that the single entrants under affirmative action programs may often hold solo and token roles” (p. 55).

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