



## English, *Español*, and “Academia”: The crossover socialization of multilingual Latino male faculty in education

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Although recent literature has acknowledged the lack of representation of men of color in education (Harper, 2014; Irizarry, 2011; Irizarry & Raible, 2011; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; 2011), few studies have focused on the experience of Latino students and faculty; their stories and experiences “remain largely inaudible, invisible, and underexplored” (Irizarry, 2011, p. 2816). Similar to Latino students, Latino faculty face discrimination, prejudice (Mindiola, 1995), and oppression within higher education. These challenges include: being one of a few within the university setting and having limited mentorship and emotional support throughout their careers. Latino/a faculty members are significantly underrepresented in higher education settings; the NCES (2002) noted that 3% of full-time instructional faculty were Latino/a, half of whom were assistant professors or instructors.

To date there have been few studies that focus on understanding how Latino male faculty members make meaning of their socialization into the academy, specifically looking at how their socialization impacts the decisions to pursue full-time and tenure-track positions in the field of education (see, for example Castellanos et al., 2006; Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Padilla & Chavez, 1995; Renaud, 2003). Dr. Cristobal Salinas conducted a phenomenological study to begin to fill the gap in research as it relates to the lived experiences of how Latino male faculty members make meaning of their socialization into the academia and how socialization impacts their decisions to pursue full-time and tenure-track positions in the field of education.

As such, the following research questions guided this study: 1.) How do tenure-track and full-time tenured Latino male faculty members enter the field of education? 2.) How do tenure-track and full-time tenured Latino male faculty members make meaning of their socialization into the academy? Here is a summary of the key findings from this study.

### **Family Influences**

The men of this study shared the influence that their families had on their choice of a college or university. Participants chose to attend an institution to attain an academic degree based on its location or distance from their family and family ties. Family influences and support demonstrate the impact they have on Latino students’ performance and success in education (Woolley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009). Other research has indicated that family is important in the Latino/a culture, and that family influences the values and behavior of Latino students as they aim toward a degree in higher education (Canul, 2003; Hernandez, 2005; Rendón et al., 2014; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Yet, Latino/a students’ families might not understand the process or how to support and actively engage in decisions related to college admission, financial aid, academic curricula, and leadership development (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Salinas, 2015).

### **Family *Dichos***

Family influences had a tremendous impact on participants’ decision to enter the field of education. In relation to family influences, family *dichos*, stories, and narratives played a significant role for participants as they chose to attain a college education and enter a new landing space, and they had a permanent effect on participants’ lives. *Dichos* documented the knowledge of lived experiences, feelings, values, ethics, morals, and beliefs of participants of this study. Participants shared and discussed *dichos*, stories, and narratives that had been handed down to them by their parents about the importance of attaining a college education and performing well there. The *dichos* and stories were shared within families and from generation to generation, and they were a significant factor for participants when entering the field of education and in being socialized into the academy.

### **Seeking Justice and Gaining Privilege through Education**

The men of this study indicated how they experienced, noticed, and recognized oppression within their families and communities. These forms of oppression were determining factors that influenced all men to continue with their educational careers. Through family *dichos* and stories, participants understood that attaining an education, a doctoral degree, would give them access to privilege. Participants’ narratives highlighted and recognized that they were oppressed for being Latinos. All participants pursued earning a doctoral degree to advance justice through a very action-based approach for oppressed communities.

### **Crossing Geographical Borders**

The men in this study navigated from one landing space to another, crossing geographical borders to attain a higher education degree. All participants relocated from one community to another community; they crossed county borders, state borders, and even the U.S.–Mexico border to enroll in a college or university. Ricardo was the only participant who was born outside the United States; he came to the United States as an international student at the age of 24 years, later becoming a U.S. resident. The other six participants self-identified as second or fourth generation; they were born and raised in the United States. Ricardo acknowledged that he crossed the border, whereas other men in the study stated that, although they did not cross the border, the border crossed them and their families as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe.

### Language of the Academy

The men in this study indicated their primary language: four indicated that they were proficient in both English and Spanish, and three indicated that they were proficient in English. In addition to speaking English and Spanish, participants indicated that they had learned the research language of “Academia” as a new language as part of their socialization. Linguistic acquisition intersected with the participants’ backgrounds, predispositions, families, peers, and identities as they chose to communicate and navigate from one landing space to another.

### Gender/Male Privilege

The men of the study recognized that, through their socialization and training in graduate school and now as faculty members, female colleagues were more likely to be oppressed. Even though Latinos still hold gender privilege over Latinas, Latinos are still at numerical risk of being marginalized and disenfranchised in American society (Noguera et al., 2011). Nonetheless, unearned gender privilege was recognized throughout the participants’ narratives, and this reflected the reason that they persisted in advocating and attempting to create just environments for female colleagues.

### Creating Justice and Promoting Access through Research, Teaching, and Service

Even though participants were rewarded based on research, teaching, and service (Bray & Major, 2008), they continuously felt the need to work for and attempt to create new opportunities for marginalized communities. In addition, participants felt the responsibility to educate future school leaders, including teachers, administrators, student affairs professionals, and faculty. In comparing the participants’ research, they all focused on issues related to topics that were important to them and significant to their attempts to improve communities as a whole, with an emphasis on the Latino community. Additionally, participants of the study described their socialization experiences as feeling alone and isolated. When the participants experienced isolation into the academy, they understood that they could return to their communities to reconnect with their roots. Moreover, the participants expressed their sense of responsibility to attend to creating justice and promoting access for marginalized communities through their work.

### Implications for Practice

The primary goal of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Latino male faculty members, how they make meaning of their socialization into the academy, and how socialization impacts their decisions to pursue full-time and tenure-track positions in the field of education. The findings suggest that through their socialization, Latino male faculty are crossing intellectual, emotional, psychological, and geographical borders. Colleges and universities need to provide a more supportive and nurturing environment that promotes, supports, and rewards Latino male faculty. These faculty should be empowered by their departments and institutions to advance their research without a personal or professional cost. Neither they nor any other faculty member should be pressured to choose between their identities, their culture, their family, or their senses of self in order to be successful in the promotion and tenure process in higher education.

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