

Article

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Discovering a hidden privilege: Ethnography in multiracial organizations as an outsider within

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Abstract

In this article I use an ‘outsider within’ epistemology to conduct a reflexive analysis of the impact of researcher characteristics on gathering data in multiracial organizations. The reported research elucidates that the intersection of race, gender, class background, age and occupational prestige influenced the ethnographer’s social interactions with respondents in the teaching profession. With examples selected principally from two years of ethnographic fieldwork in two predominantly racial/ethnic minority multiracial schools in Southern California, I identify a *hidden privilege* for Latina professionals. I contend that unlike white or male privilege, which are granted consciously and unconsciously, the hidden privilege is fleeting, and works only when verbally revealed in occupations held in lower prestige.

Keywords

hidden privilege, outsider within, occupational prestige, age, studying up, studying down, Latina professionals

Sociologists have long debated the merits and payoffs of field research conducted by both ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ (see Merton, 1972; Zinn, 1979, 2001; Collins, 1986, 2000). When I set out to do a study of professional and upwardly mobile Latina¹ teachers as both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’ in multiracial elementary schools in June 2009, I did not envision that navigating aspects of occupational prestige *and* age would be methodological dilemmas. In this paper, I explain how my social location as the college-educated daughter of working-class, Mexican immigrant parents influenced the ways in which men and women, white, African American and Asian American teachers of diverse class backgrounds, interacted with me during interviews and ethnography. I address how the respondents

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changed their own mannerisms and behaviors when I was in the field, showing the *hidden privilege* some Latina professionals possess, and document its fleeting nature in organizations. I argue Collins's (1986) concept of the 'outsider within' adequately captures the struggles race/ethnic minority scholars face in the field as they conduct research in multiracial organizations and schools.

According to Collins (1986, 2000), racial/ethnic minority scholars are *outsiders within* because of their 'outsider' social location in academic institutions that privilege whiteness, silencing the voices of racial others. In such institutions, outsiders within become aware of the mechanisms that keep power, systemic racism, and privilege in place. As I conducted this study on Latina teachers in multiracial elementary schools, I had to contend with my age, educational and occupational prestige vis-à-vis the teachers. Though I am a part of the second generation,² I do not benefit from white racial privilege in the US racial structure; however, I do benefit from a *hidden privilege* due to the prestige accorded to a doctoral degree. I term this a hidden privilege because it was not readily visible unless I revealed it verbally. It was when I explicitly told the respondents that I was working towards a PhD that their interactions and demeanor changed. As an outsider within, I embodied a unique space to witness these subtle interactions and snubs in multiracial schools with both men and women teachers of various racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Although I was a native 'insider' with Latina teacher participants, I was also an 'outsider' with non-Latina respondents at the same research site. The many debates (Merton, 1972; Zinn, 1979, 2001; Collins, 1986, 2000) over ethnographic studies conducted by outsiders and insiders in the domain of knowledge production caused Merton (1972: 44) to call for them to 'unite', instead of focusing on how intersubjectivity or 'presumed' objectivity leads to greater insights. However, Merton's call for unity did not take into account how the larger context of racial/ethnic relations and the fluctuating prestige of an occupation could influence the data collection process. For instance, while occupations such as medicine and law are accorded a high prestige, the prestige of teaching has been fluid (Abbott, 1988). This prestige fluctuates depending on the school's location, funding, and demographic composition. This can impact the research process because schools held in lower prestige may be wary of being researched as they may be under constant scrutiny to improve.

Zinn (1979) argued Chicano³ scholar insiders – and all racial/ethnic minority scholars – could engage their subjectivities as methodological tools in the recruitment of potential research participants and posed this would strengthen their analysis. Academics that are racialized others must often deal with an academic structure that does not give them the privilege of being able to study the whole world (Villenas, 1996). Zinn (1979: 209) postulated that 'Minority researchers have empirical and methodological advantages, but also face unique problems in addressing ethical, methodological and political concerns' such as navigating fieldwork dilemmas, the politics of identity, and their commitment to racial/ethnic minority communities and the academy. Many of these advantages are being attuned to a range of dramaturgical behaviors (Goffman, 1959) in a myriad of settings.

Drawbacks include figuring out how to navigate both frontstage and backstage race behaviors, as the backstage and frontstage may intersect, blurring the boundaries between spaces, and leading to a 'spoiled performance' that is fitting for a stranger who is not white to witness (Picca and Feagin, 2007). This is especially important for US scholars to take into account today, because racial/ethnic minorities are more likely to live in multiracial communities (Saito, 1998).

What are the dynamics that emerge when an upwardly mobile woman of color studies multiracial organizations and schools that are held in lower prestige? And, how does a hidden privilege manifest in these interactions? Drawing on interview and participant observation data collected in two Southern California multiracial schools, I recontextualize the ways in which racial privilege is conceived and how it works in the formation of relationships that are important in ethnographic work. I show how I was accorded a hidden privilege that I rarely experience in day-to-day micro-level interactions by way of three main themes that became evident as a Latina 'outsider within': 1) age and occupational prestige; 2) age and Latina controlling images; and 3) navigating multiple identities/tests of Mexican 'authenticity'.

This article is organized to present the literature that informs the research, methodology, and the inextricable link of characteristics that impact the research process. The article is structured according to the three main phases of ethnographic field research: gaining entry, experiences conducting interviews and participant observation, and exiting the field. I analyze the power relations between researcher and researched during each stage, illuminating how researcher social location and the occupational prestige of the teaching 'semi-profession' (Abbott, 1988; Williams, 1992) influenced the analytical implications for a young ethnographer. This exploration will be against the backdrop of the complex nature of conducting research in multiracial organizations and discusses how ethical dilemmas were negotiated, giving way to knowledge of a 'hidden privilege' for outsiders within during the research field process.

Race, gender, class and occupational prestige

Much has been written about the intersection of race, gender and class in qualitative ethnographic studies of organizations such as schools and workplaces (Murti, 2012; López, 2002). Educational institutions are unique social laboratories to examine the intersection of these dynamics because they are a subset of a broader organizational structure that splinters off into different categories (i.e. elementary, college), each of which is accorded a distinct prestige (Abbott, 1988). In the United States, teachers are not accorded the same prestige as doctors, lawyers, or university professors. Unlike European nations such as Spain, Portugal and Finland that hold teaching in high regard (Hargreaves, 2009), teaching is regarded as a 'semi-profession' in the US and is not revered as a high status achievement or occupation, as is obtaining a doctoral degree (Abbott, 1988). Tomaskovic-Devey (1993) suggests that a job's prestige devalues as more women and racial minorities enter it.

This decline in occupational status in teaching coincides with the exit of white baby boomers and entrance of Latina women into the profession (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Today, Latina women have become the fastest racial/ethnic minority group to enter teaching (Current Population Survey, 2007). Conversely, less than one percent of Latinos in the US obtain a doctoral degree (US of Labor Bureau, 2010), and the group suffers from the lowest educational levels of all racial/ethnic minority groups in the nation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). To date, there has not been an analysis of the privilege accorded to young racial/ethnic minority academics while gathering data in decidedly non-white multiracial organizations.

Acker (2006), however, argues that all work organizations have 'inequality regimes' that are fluid and reflect patterns of inequality in the surrounding society, but they are not always visible to all members. While the culture of early education is clearly gendered and feminized, Williams (1992) notes that white men teachers experience a 'glass escalator', elevated into higher positions such as administration. The same does not hold true for black men, who experience a 'glass barrier' in feminized occupations, and are often met with hostility and racism from patients and coworkers (Wingfield, 2009). In many cases, black male nurses were exposed to frontstage race behaviors (Picca and Feagin, 2007). These studies demonstrate that racial and gender privilege in professional occupations is fluid and varies depending on the organization, even if individuals perform similar duties.

Studies have also documented how professionals from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds still face racial discrimination and gendered racist stereotypes despite achieving mobility into white-collar jobs (Wax, 1979; Segura, 1992; Vallejo, 2009; Feagin and Sikes, 1995). In specific, they demonstrate how a scholar's gender, age, prestige, or ethnic identity may limit or determine what they can accomplish as they conduct field research in different occupations. In her study of South Asian physicians, a racially ambiguous group in the United States, Murti (2012) notes the 'white coat', the traditional garb, serves to protect male doctors from racism. Murti, the daughter of a South Asian immigrant doctor, finds South Asian female doctors were not accorded the occupational citizenship and privilege rendered to men – illustrating how occupational privilege is contextual and contingent on socio-historical events. López (2002), a Dominican sociologist, used her experiences with racism and sexism to gain trust and develop friendships with Dominican respondents in a New York City high school. White teachers held her in higher esteem when she wore her 'visitor sticker' on school grounds. Rios (2011), a 1.5 generation Mexican immigrant, shared his own experiences with youth delinquency to bridge the researcher and participant power gap with black and brown boys, but still found himself racially profiled by police during the research process. As Lipsitz (1998) recalls, the 'possessive investment in whiteness' is the security of privilege in which whites and others consciously and unconsciously invest, perpetuating both overt and covert racism that has been institutionally, systematically and purposefully created, constructed, and protected throughout history. This is especially the case in school and work organizations that privilege whiteness.

The importance of age and intersectionality

The intersections of race/ethnicity, gender and class have been shown to play a role in the collection of data in field research (Belur, 2014; López, 2002), but age, the perceived age of the researcher, and its intersection to other social locations has largely been unexamined (exceptions include Wax, 1979). Wax (1979: 518) argued that young women in their 20s 'have the most difficult time in the field' because they enter alone, but can produce outstanding field reports such as Margaret Mead did in her fieldwork in Samoa at the age of 23. Laz's work (1998) reminds us that age, like race and gender, is socially constructed and given meaning through interaction. Considering the social construction of age is especially important for Latina scholars, who are socialized to demonstrate deference to the elderly and those in positions of authority (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005), and because women face additional gendered and racialized assumptions about deference in their jobs (Segura, 1992; Cassell, 2000). Cassell (2000) finds older men surgeons were given deference from women nurses at work, whereas women doctors were questioned about their expertise. While Cassell provides a gendered analysis, Collins (2000: 5) elucidates how racist and sexist ideologies permeate the social structure and become hegemonic – seen as natural, normal, inevitable – and work through 'controlling images'. The pervasive image of Latina women in the US is that they are 'hot *mamacitas*' (López, 2002) or 'hyper fertile' reproductive machines (Gutierrez, 2008). The possession of high academic credentials does not shield college-educated Latinas from gendered racist stereotypes in their professions which follow them into the field as well.

Peggy McIntosh (1988) compiled a list of the invisible knapsack of privilege to show how it is not distributed equally or shared by individuals of every race/ethnicity and gender. Among the items on her list is, 'I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.' Unlike white scholars, Latina scholars are not immune from these over-generalizations. My physical appearance as a brown-skinned woman played a tremendous role in the ways study participants regarded me. Segura (1992: 172) found Mexican-American women in white-collar jobs understand that 'Employers, co-workers . . . and society itself maintain pejorative, stereotypical images of Chicana and Hispanic women'. Although Latinos are not a monolithic population, they are plagued by what Zhou and Lee (2007) call the 'immigrant shadow', the notion that all Latinos are poor, uneducated and unauthorized. Like middle-class blacks that cannot escape being stereotyped as impoverished and uneducated, Latinas cannot evade the immigrant shadow when interacting with whites (Vallejo, 2009). Even when Latinas hold high status occupations, they are racialized as non-skilled workers (Segura, 1992). Thus, age, in conjunction with the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, and class can produce different outcomes within occupations that are held in lower prestige, such as teaching.

Methods and research description

The analysis presented in this paper was born out of a PhD dissertation on the mobility pathways of college-educated Latinas and the workplace dynamics

between them and their coworkers in two multiracial communities and school districts in Southern California: Compton (Latino/African American) and Rosemead (Latino/Asian American). Teaching was selected because it is the top occupational niche drawing second-generation, college-educated Latinas in California (Flores and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2014). After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in 2009, I conducted 24 months of ethnography and 50 semi-structured interviews⁴ with teachers. These face-to-face interviews were formally planned, and were used to gauge perceptions of race relations in these schools from a number of angles. While interviews helped the researcher interpret informal interactions and analyze impromptu conversations in the process of conducting participant observation, the analysis mainly draws from over 400 hours of ethnography on and off campus at two multiracial elementary schools, Goodwill Elementary and Compton Elementary.

Goodwill Elementary in the Garvey Unified District is comprised of Latina and Asian teachers. In the Garvey District, 56% of students are Asian, 41% are Latino and only 1% are white (California Department of Education, 2013). The teacher distribution mirrored the student breakdown with Asian teachers (40%) outnumbering Latinas (26%) in the district. Compton Elementary was selected because Compton is a Latino immigrant and African American community. Although the city of Compton is racialized as an African American city by popular culture, today over 80% of the students are of working-class Latino origin, and the percentage of black students (20%) is dwindling. The teachers in Compton schools are predominantly African American and Latino (66%), with African American teachers outnumbering Latinos/as, 41% and 25%, respectively (CDE, 2013); only 20% are white.

I used participant observation to capture daily interactions between teachers, students and parents during school hours at all school events, in their classrooms, field-trips and off-campus gatherings such as visits to parents' homes. Goffman (2001: 154) explains the process of 'getting into place' when conducting fieldwork at any site. This means that researchers must weigh the contingencies that a set of respondents are immersed in so that ethnographers 'can physically and ecologically penetrate [the respondents'] circle of response' in order to comprehend their social situation. To accomplish this, I volunteered for any social events on and off school grounds and served as a translator for teachers regularly.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and sets of 'jottings' were converted into extensive field notes (Emerson et al., 1995). I used Strauss's (1987) coding scheme to evaluate the data, meaning that each transcript and set of field notes was read various times, line-by-line, and anatomized into key themes. This coding process yielded broader ideas that were renamed and modified into sharper conceptual categories as recurrent patterns emerged in the data. This process helped flesh out themes identified in the interview data that could only be captured and reinforced through attentive and careful participant observation.

Findings

An insider gaining entry to multiracial schools

That being an insider is more complicated than it may first appear has been addressed by Turvo (2012), Wagle and Cantaffa (2008), Fine (1998), and especially by Villenas (1996), who explains the blurred boundaries she wrestled with as both the colonizer/colonized Chicana ethnographer. The field posed a unique set of circumstances for me from the moment I set foot in it, before I uttered a single word. In many respects I was an insider because I shared similarities with Latina teacher respondents (gender, ethnicity), but I also remained an outsider because I was young. Age complicated gaining social acceptance by established professionals who initially did not see me as a competent colleague, and then regarded me as an anomaly when I revealed my status. I was also an outsider to non-Latina teachers. I found that due to my subjective positioning, respondents reacted to my physical appearance with a series of assumptions, influencing their perceptions of my motives. One key informant Latina teacher warned, 'It's gonna be hard for you. They [Asian teachers] are going to think that you are being biased because you are Latina.' Fine (1998: 72) argues that scholars should work the hyphen – 'in relation with the contexts we study and with our informants, understanding that we are all multiple in those relations'. The Self-Other hyphen, according to Fine, means that researchers must explore the hyphen that both separates and merges personal identities with our perceptions of Others and to be reflexive over the story that is being told or shadowed, and its interpretation. Wagle and Cantaffa (2008) underscore that ethnographers must examine how identities shift throughout the research process in relation to the identities of the participants. The complications include self-policing of words to protect rapport, acquiring an outsider within status of multiple identities and 'a gesture of inclusion in "whiteness"' (hooks, 1989: 68). Collins (1986, 2000) notes we can learn much from the outsider within because in spite of the hurdles they experience in the academic realm, such individuals can tap into this status in field research. This is precisely what I experienced, as my sociological training and first-hand experience in these communities gave me the insight that I had to compromise and hide my own political beliefs in order to appease all of the respondents. Although I engaged the subjectivities of Latina teachers, I was also held at a social distance from black, white and Asian teachers.

Obtaining site permission consent at these schools was both the smoothest and most difficult entanglement I faced when getting IRB approval.⁵ School districts require all volunteers and employees to get a tuberculosis (TB) test and a Live Scan fingerprinting to conduct a thorough criminal background check. As a former employee for the Santa Ana Unified School District, my fingerprints were on file and I had taken a series of TB tests that always tested negative.⁶ The principal at Goodwill Elementary in Rosemead was an amiable Latina woman and signed the consent form as soon as I explained the parameters of my study. This principal was extremely supportive of my educational endeavors and immediately opened up to me regarding race relations in her school. She gave me free reign, allowing me to

conduct observations at all campus events, and tacked a note to the Daily Bulletin Announcements that read: 'We will have a graduate student conducting interviews with teachers and doing observations.' This principal also allowed me to present my project at Parent Teacher Association meetings, provided me with a room to conduct focus groups, and also offered to provide me with an English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese translator. Zinn (2001) observes that gender and ethnicity can facilitate access and ongoing relationships with informants, especially when 'insiders' are conducting research in racial/ethnic minority communities. Although the Latina principal was third generation and not fluent in Spanish, shared gender and ethnic background allowed access.

Gaining entry into Compton Elementary, on the other hand, was uncomfortable and sometimes demoralizing. I anticipated a slight difficulty in gaining entry considering that urban and immigrant school districts in California are under scrutiny for their performance on high stakes tests. The Latina office secretary (late 50s), whom I later befriended, shunned me four times. She was the initial gatekeeper and controlled access to the principal via phone and in person. Our connection in race/ethnicity and gender was not enough to grant me a meeting with him. This illustrates how ethnographic insiders must be reflexive on the nature of their 'nativeness' in the field as it may change (Narayan, 1993; Subedi and Rhee, 2008). While I attempted to draw connections with Latina respondents by drawing on ethnic markers (speaking Spanish), I was not always successful. This made me ponder over the higher status a doctoral degree holds that gives its owners sway, but also raises suspicions for those serving and protecting minority and vulnerable populations. On the phone, the Latina office secretary would say the principal was 'at a district meeting' or 'not in his office'.

After unsuccessfully trying to schedule a sit-down meeting over the phone, I chose to drive to the school. This was my first on-site attempt. This visit was when I met the Latina secretary, who was born in Mexico and whose family had roots in Compton spanning more than 30 years. I explained I had phoned and decided to come in since it sounded like they were very busy. Again, the Latina secretary replied, '[The principal is] at lunch right now. I don't know when he will be back.' I asked, 'Is it okay if I wait for him here? Until he has an open spot?' Frustrated, the Latina secretary said, 'Where are you going to sit?' Stunned by her response I said, 'I can sit on this chair right here by the door.' She wanted me to retreat and retorted, 'After his lunch he is going to be at meetings all day.' Dejected, I closed the door and made my way to exit the campus. I saw a student, approximately 10-years-old, who was about to enter the front office and asked her if the principal was on campus. The little Latina girl said, 'Yeah. He's right there!', pointing to an African American man wearing a light green tweed coat with dark elbow patches. I did not introduce myself to the principal then because I did not want to undermine the Latina administrative assistant's power. She was someone I would have to see daily and I did not want to override her authority.

I tried one last time to call the school. I devised a script I would read over the phone. Somehow I was directed to the district office, which rerouted my call to the

direct line of the vice principal, avoiding the front office secretary. The African American vice principal helped me schedule a meeting with the principal. In our meeting, I explained I wanted to understand the experiences of racial/ethnic minority teachers and their relationships with students and parents. A longtime Compton resident, he was worried I was there to cast a negative light on the school and was put at ease when I revealed I was an academic and not a journalist. An academic of a racial/ethnic minority background that had attended public schools, in his purview, signified I was an *outsider within* in terms of our mutual interests as educators in finding solutions to help low-income children of color through the educational pipeline, and that I was not seeking a news story. He granted me access once I presented him with all of the consent forms and interview dockets.

Much like the Latina secretary, I found some Latina teachers at Compton Elementary were afraid of speaking with me. One Latina teacher, who at my study's onset slammed her door in my face, said, 'I thought you were a reporter and I would get fired.' Subtle paranoia prevailed because these teachers were working in a school that was already in danger of being taken over for their low performance on high stakes tests. Other Latina teachers agreed to the interview because of their displeasure with the district, and wanted to say in confidential interviews what they could not discuss openly with their colleagues and administration. Gaining entry into these sites shows outsider within status, and the occupational prestige associated with being an academic gave way to a hidden privilege among racial/ethnic minorities in teaching.

Age and occupational prestige

Age *and* the occupational prestige attributed to academics increased the visibility of privilege for an outsider within in multiracial settings. My experiences in the field were compounded by the fact that I was much younger than most of the respondents. Within ethnographic studies there is a tendency, not without exceptions (Sherman, 2007), for scholars to 'study down' versus 'studying up'. In sociology there is a propensity to examine the occupational trajectories of Latinos who work in 'brown-collar' jobs or in the informal sector of the economy (Ramirez, 2011; Estrada, 2013; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). However, emerging research has begun to examine the mobility pathways of second-generation Latinos across the US (see Morando, 2013) and those who are entering white-collar fields (Vallejo, 2009). In this field study of race relations in multiracial organizations and schools, the power relations between studying down and studying up were less clear. I was studying 'down' because I was investigating a group that works in an occupation that is devalued and is further underrated because these are lower-income, predominantly racial/ethnic minority schools. I was also studying 'up' because of the age differential between us – younger interviewing older – requiring a certain mode of decorum and respect.

When I initially approached teachers for an interview I purposefully behaved deferentially because I wanted them to participate and because I was a young

Latina. An important component of Latina/o socialization is demonstrating respect to elders and professionals through deference, especially with regard to age (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005). I was well aware my age, in conjunction with my educational credentials, could be used as grounds to label me as arrogant in these multiracial schools with diverse staff. When I first solicited teachers I sent them a long letter detailing the study, and attached a school business card to prove that I was a legitimate scholar. I explained they were the experts and I was there to learn from them. For me this was essential because over 90 per cent of the teachers in the sample were older than I was and most of them held a Bachelor's degree and a teaching credential. Only four interviewees were younger than I was.

Similarly to Zinn (1979) who observes racial/ethnic minority communities develop self-protective behaviors to deal with outsiders and to protect themselves from academic exploitation, teachers informed me they thought I might be 'uppity' or 'elitist' and wondered if I was coming to their schools to find fault with the ways in which they were doing their jobs. Akin to Villenas (1996), who silenced herself so she could have conversations with community leaders who were the key to accessing the educational institutions that serviced poor Latinos, I was aware of the politics and privilege assigned to the researcher role.

This became apparent to me when I conducted observations with the fourth grade team in Compton Elementary. Mrs. Madrigal, a 33-year-old Latina teacher, introduced me to the rest of her colleagues by saying, 'This is Ms. Flores. She's a real brainy.' As their meeting continued, I heard her whisper to an older African American female colleague, 'She thinks she's all better than us cuz she's getting a PhD.' 'Oh stop', said the African American woman looking over in my direction. 'What?' I asked, smiling. Mrs. Madrigal jokingly said, 'I'm just hatin' on you girl! I'm just hatin' on you cause you're gettin' a PhD. Naww girl, I'm just giving you props cuz I wasn't able to do something like that.' When I told teachers I was conducting this study for a doctoral degree in sociology at USC, most Latina women told me they had aspired for more prestigious careers, but were socially channeled into teaching. Other teachers reacted with 'Oh's' to signal amazement and some immediately followed up with 'How old are you?' Age was a source of needling, but it also served to curtail some of the negative stereotypes attributed to Latina women with all respondents.

As a young sociologist, however, I had to deal with older teachers disrespecting and undermining me. While I was taking field notes during a third grade meeting, Mrs. Beasley, a 44-year-old African American teacher, queried:

What do you take notes on over there Ms. Flores?' I replied, 'Just words that will help me remember things.' 'Oh really. Can I see what you are writing?' she said half-jokingly. I thought she was kidding. She walked over to my space and ripped the 'jottings' sheet away from my hands, attempting to make out my chicken scratch writing. She squinted at the paper but could not make it all out. She did catch a full phrase and said, 'Wow, it seems like you really are taking notice of us then,' as she handed me back my sheet and sat with her colleagues.

Laz (1998) argues age is more social than chronological, suggesting it is both a process and an outcome of interactional work. The aforementioned vignette elucidates that Ms. Beasley was attempting to show me she was the boss and expert in her classroom in front of her coworkers. I purposely downplayed my educational credentials at the sites to avoid presenting myself as elitist and only revealed them unless they probed me for specificity because I wanted to fit in.

Behaving overly deferential also had its drawbacks. Mrs. Madrigal said, 'I just want you to get this done. You aren't going to get anywhere being timid like that.' She said she understood why I was being so meek, but she feared this tactic would backfire and advised me to be more aggressive in approaching teachers. This made me aware of a hidden privilege because Mrs. Madrigal acknowledged that although we shared a similar social location as Latina educators, ultimately, we did not hold the same social status in the school because of our educational levels and the prestige associated to our occupations. Because of this, she implored I be more assertive in approaching other teachers, bypassing my age in a way and emphasizing the power of a doctoral degree. Over time I realized I was ashamed of and felt guilty over the prestige that automatically comes with a PhD. I attempted to minimize its significance to myself and among racial minority respondents in order to get interviews with them, but I had to over-emphasize my credentials with white and Asian respondents because of the culture of poverty stereotypes associated to Latinos in education. Gauging the perceptions of participants towards upwardly mobile racial/ethnic minorities was difficult to navigate.

Age and Latina controlling images

López (2002), a Dominican sociologist, actively implemented strategies to maintain connections with coethnic students by revealing her experiences with racialized sexual harassment, but also wore a visible school pass on her clothing to shield herself from the controlling images that are applied to Latina women daily, especially those associated with fertility (Gutiérrez, 2008). In formal interviews, Latina teachers informed me they faced gendered racist stereotypes associated to their ethnic background. On her first day at Compton Elementary school, Mrs. Rivas, a 39-year-old teacher, was told by an African American male teacher, 'You're not a typical Latina because you only have two kids. Most Latinas have six kids.' During the interview, Mrs. Rivas said she was not insulted by this comment because she had heard it before from Latinos, but indicated other college-educated colleagues of hers said, 'You should have gotten mad.' I soon found that I, too, could not escape the controlling images of a Latina woman and was stereotyped as a teenage mother or was met with Latino expectations of motherhood, and age served to either exacerbate or assuage these interactions.

I first realized upward mobility did not protect me from pejorative stereotypes applied to Latina women at Back to School Night at Compton Elementary. Mrs. Crescent, a 33-year-old Salvadoran and Cuban, third-grade teacher, asked me to translate her portion of the presentation to the parents. Mrs. Crescent asked me to

move some of the chairs in her classroom to another teacher's room. I was carrying my backpack and two chairs, struggling with one in each hand. When I walked into the room, I set one of the chairs down and tried to approach the male teacher to shake his hand. Mr. Davis, a white male teacher, 40, was short, with blonde-buzzed hair, and blue eyes. He stared at me for a bit and asked, 'Oh, which one of my students are you the parent of?' Taken aback I said, 'Oh, I don't have any kids.' He continued, 'I thought you looked a little young to have a child. You look like you are in your early 20s and I have eight-year-olds in my class. It's very common to see that in this community.' Taken aback, I said, 'I'm a doctoral student doing observations for a research project.' He perked up, smiled and exclaimed, 'Oh wow!' He took the chair I was carrying from my hands, pretended to dust it off, extended his arm motioning me to pick whichever chair I wanted and said, 'You can sit wherever you'd like.' This interaction with Mr. Davis is significant because his initial assessment of me as a teenage mother was further ingrained by his comment that it was a common pattern among Latinas. His gesture of wiping down a chair for me once I revealed I was a doctoral student made me aware of the *hidden privilege* I was accorded as a young PhD candidate because it meant he was giving *me* deference and respect, even if only temporarily.

Similar events took place with other non-Latino teachers. When I first approached Mr. Allen, a 45-year-old white teacher at Compton Elementary, for an interview, he was very dismissive. The first time I tried to speak to him, he lifted a folder to shield his face and rushed past me, leaving me with words in my mouth. On another occasion, I gave him a polite 'Hello' and he gave me a very perturbed 'Hi', rolled his eyes and kept walking. The notes below show how his tone changed as my time in the field progressed and when I revealed my hidden status:

Mr. Allen has come around and has begun asking me questions about the doctoral program and my research. 'I think it's great you are doing this. You are going so much higher than I ever did.' On several occasions Mr. Allen made it a point to make sure I saw him doing favorable acts in front of Latino families. If he saw me in Mrs. Madrigal's classroom, he would instantly peek inside and give me an enthusiastic, 'Hey! How are you?' Once he came in and watered her plant. Mrs. Madrigal corroborated this. 'Oh how cute,' she said. 'He is so different when you are around.' 'What do you mean by that?' I asked her as I stacked some books on a shelf. 'It's like whenever you are around, he is nicer to me or more helpful. Like he is trying to be that nice white man that comes to help our kids or whatever. I got that impression when I first started working here. He gave me the feeling that I'm not worth your time. But because I have that college education, it's like I'm not that Mexican [poor and uneducated].'

Mr. Allen's behavior and impression management made me question his daily interactions with Latino immigrant parents when I was not present. Mr. Allen took on a white savior role as impression management to a well-educated, 'exceptional' Latina, making me ponder the hidden privilege I possessed and what it

meant about power possessed by a racial/ethnic minority outsider within with an academic degree. My presence made him change his behavior towards other Latina teachers and the children, but only for a moment, and only with minor tasks. Moreover, some respondents changed their demeanor towards me (and in front of other Latina teachers) and gave me lauds and laurels once they knew I was in a doctoral program and not a Latina teenage mother. It was then that many non-Latino participants agreed to the interview, because they equated a higher education with social distance from my ethnic group. In Rosemead, Asian teachers and personnel were more likely to participate when I revealed my academic credentials and affiliation with an elite private university. I was able to temporarily escape the 'immigrant shadow' in these multiracial schools and see how privilege operated not only for me, but how it caused others who associated me with prestige to alter their actions into something they thought I would approve of in the moment.

Not all teachers rebuffed me. One way I developed ongoing rapport with respondents was by sharing minor details about personal relationships as a young professional. This broke the ice with teachers who were familiarizing themselves with me. As a native insider, this allowed me to develop an instant connection with Latina teachers who had experienced gendered dating constraints in their immigrant families (López, 2002). The sample included Latina teachers who were single, engaged, married and divorced. The overwhelming majority of them were married and in heterosexual unions. Several Latina respondents in the sample asked me if I had a significant other and when I said, 'No' or 'I haven't had time' some of them seemed disappointed, offering me advice in the area, fearing I might have trouble finding someone as I got older. Some urged me to postpone a relationship until I finished the doctoral program. Others encouraged me to sign up for online dating sites like Match.com and invited me to attend Latino Professional Night (LPN) events. Ms. Gutierrez, who met her boyfriend at an LPN event, shared the trouble she had dating non-Latino men who saw her as exotic, and Latino men who expected her to manage her job and cater to them. My relationship status and these women's involvement in setting me up not only helped me establish deeper rapport, but also provided me with outsider within status that granted me access and inclusion to their personal lives away from the job.

For instance, Latina teachers also set me up on two blind dates, unbeknown to me. When I was about to depart from her engagement party, Mrs. Gutierrez (35) informed me she had invited a potential suitor for me. 'I've known him for a while,' she said. 'My fiancée invited someone for you too. We thought you could pick,' she said with a laugh. As I hugged her when departing she said, 'You should call him. Let me give you his number.' At my next visit to the school she asked, 'Have you called him?' I said, 'I haven't had time.' She seemed irritated and exasperated: 'Just call him.'⁷ The fact that Mrs. Gutierrez tried to goad me into calling her male friend, instead of vice versa, suggested to me the power she accorded to my educational credentials and researcher role. Due to my age, it was difficult for me to traverse the relationship between researcher and friend with Latina teachers

because some of them saw me as a younger sibling that needed to be protected or mentored, but also as someone who possessed influence.

Latina teachers were not the only ones curious to hear about my personal life. In one instance, a Latino teacher who was married said it would be too hard for women to find a mate in teaching. For an older and unmarried teacher he used the Spanish idiom, '*No a ellas ya se les pasó el tren*' [No for them, the train has passed].⁸ This was in relation to his women colleagues who were not married. Another Latino teacher inappropriately sent me a message alluding to my physical appearance after the holiday party. I ignored it. He later apologized and said he 'had a little too much to drink.' In addition, some Latino male respondents in Compton would often expose me to jokes of a sexual nature in Spanish. This falls in line with Wax's (1979) finding that young unmarried women ethnographers in the field were susceptible to flirtatious behavior, jokes, and propositions from men. In her work, Belur (2014) notes her occupational status as a senior ranking police officer accounted for greater responsibility than her middle-aged status for warding off unwanted advances from men police officers during her ethnographic research, but this was not the case for me. Even though I felt uncomfortable, the boundaries between researcher and friend were less clear with Latino/a respondents because the associations to my age as a Latina impacted these relationships.

Navigating multiple identities/tests of Mexican authenticity

I did not anticipate the multiple labels I would be assigned by participants. Villenas (1996) notes that in her youth she had to manipulate her own identity as the daughter of professional Ecuadorian immigrants living in predominantly Mexican and Central American neighborhoods, but did not expect her identity to be manipulated by research respondents. At Goodwill Elementary I was mistaken for a student teacher and never for a teenage mother. I was also immediately granted an 'honorary teacher' status. The Latina principal (late 40s) said a job would be readily available for me once I finished my research. At Compton Elementary, on the other hand, African American teachers referred to me as a 'student intern,' white teachers referred to me as 'the PhD' once I informed them about my credentials, and some Latina/o teachers referred to me endearingly as *La Venadita* (a nickname that literally means little doe). Negotiating the multiple identities that respondents placed on me was very difficult. These nicknames and labels operated to include me, while simultaneously excluding me. For instance, an honorary teacher status emphasized my teaching experience, but also signified I was not a formal elementary school teacher because I was a doctoral candidate who studied teachers. The student intern nickname demonstrated my learning role in the school. And, 'the PhD' emphasized the impression my educational credentials left on some respondents, elevating the prestige accorded to me. Because of these distinct labels, I felt I had to please everyone at the research sites, even if they

sometimes overtly expressed anti-Mexican sentiments or associated me with urban gangs. The following vignette captures this strain:

Mr. Allen seemed like he wanted to strike up an urban connection with me. He often insisted I ‘fist-bump’ him when he was about to leave the campus and go home. On other occasions he pretended to walk with a limp, emulating a *cholo* [Latino gang member] stance and posture in front of me and put his fists over his chest and rolled side to side, dancing like a gangster. Mrs. Madrigal replied, ‘Oh man. That *señor* [man] is crazy.’

This dramaturgical behavior demonstrates that since I was an outsider within in these schools it granted me access to the racist jokes shared in the backstage (Goffman, 1959; Picca and Feagin, 2007), where teachers like Mr. Allen viewed me not as a person of color who would be offended by this racialized behavior, but rather as part of their private life in the backstage where I was granted access to the racialized ideas, behaviors, and notions that these teachers have about different racial groups. This was his way of using what whites believe is benign, non-racist behavior to include me in their work life. One of the ethical dilemmas I had to navigate during the research process was interfering during interactions that dealt with race or capturing the data. While Monzo (2014) relied on her Latina cultural intuition and advocated or intervened on behalf of the Latino immigrant families that encountered a white dominant gaze, I could not do the same in these diverse spaces. It was imperative I not burn bridges or cause friction between teachers because these schools were multiracial, they were small, and because teachers were hesitant to talk about race relations with each other despite daily interaction. While I was internally conflicted about vocalizing dissent, as a sociologist my primary goal was to document and understand these patterns of racialized behaviors in schools. Navigating how to respond to racialized stereotypes is an additional emotional labor researchers of color that hold distinct outsider within statuses must bear in different spaces. A negative reaction to this behavior and interaction could have affected my rapport with respondents and status as a researcher and participant.

I also had to contend with multiple and sometimes problematic teacher ‘personalities’. Because I was an outsider within, I soon realized personalities was a code Latina teachers used to characterize racial/ethnic conflict between teachers and indicate the vast array of political opinions on campus, some of which espoused meritocratic ideals and did not align with their own political views. For example, during a faculty meeting with the third-grade team, Mrs. Tiscareño (27), a younger Latina teacher, shared how her immigrant parents went above and beyond to help her because they knew the value of an education. She was angry and said, ‘My parents were poor, my parents didn’t have an education and I made it. These parents have no excuse.’ A white teacher at the meeting chimed in and said, ‘It sounds like your parents worked hard to instill the value of an education to you.’

She said, 'Yeah!' Mrs. Crescent attempted to defend Latino families and said, 'Well, you can't really blame them. I mean they have so many obstacles to overcome.' Mrs. Tiscareño reiterated, 'No, there's no excuse! I mean look at her [pointing to me], she came from the same place and made it!' My presence and position affirmed some teachers' political beliefs that the United States is a meritocracy, and gave credence to the American belief in rugged individualism: all kids could make it if they just worked hard and picked themselves up by their bootstraps. Teachers saw me as evidence. The same occurred at Goodwill Elementary, where some Asian teachers thought it was acceptable to speak ill of Latino students and families to Latina teachers when I was in the room. This speaks to the structural and systemic oppression that foundationally inscribes Latino and African Americans as inferior in education and higher mobility. To be considered an exception granted me outsider within status, and in the minds of some of these teachers 'assimilated' me and made me an acceptable representation of my ethnic group. I suggest teachers opened up the racial behaviors they safely shared in the backstage and those in the frontstage because my PhD candidacy made me worthy of their time.

There were two primary ways Latina/o teachers tested my legitimacy and 'authenticity' as a Mexican woman in the teaching field. In a climate where teachers are blamed for student underachievement, many teachers wanted to know if I had worked in a teacher capacity before. Participant observation would have been difficult to complete if I did not have a background in education because many teachers were leery of my presence. My hidden privilege helped me because teachers of color working in a devalued school understood the hardships of 'making it' in marginalized communities and the struggles of obtaining a higher education. Teachers wanted to be reassured I had managed my own classroom full of students, dealt with parents, administration and school politics. Most teachers felt a sense of relief when I told them I had worked for an urban district in Southern California, and this assuaged their hesitations about my presence in their classrooms.

Secondly, many Latina teachers tested my authenticity by asking me about my language abilities. Latina teachers wanted to gauge my stance on the preservation of native language and bilingual education, the loss of Latino ethnic culture, and assimilation into the mainstream. Morando (2013) notes second-generation and upwardly mobile Latinos see being Spanish bilingual as an asset in the workforce. Second-generation Latina teachers in this study wanted my opinion on third and fourth generation Latinos who did not have a command of their parents' native language. All Latina teachers wanted to know about my background, where I grew up, where my parents were from and if I could speak Spanish. But, these conversations played out in different ways. Most of the Latina teachers in Compton wanted to know that I could hold a conversation in Spanish, understood 'Spanglish' and could also code-switch between Spanish and English, reflective of a 'hybrid' usage of languages (Subedi and Rhee, 2008). I found most Latina teachers in Compton knew how to speak Spanish and code-switched throughout the interview and with each other. Teachers knew I was conducting a comparative study, and those in

Compton asked me about Latina teachers in Rosemead, a city with third and fourth generation Latina teachers. They wanted to ask, 'Are they coconuts over there?' or 'Are they still down for the brown? Or did they forget their roots?' In this case, bilingualism and outsider within status alerted me to the politics of language and the requisites needed to pass tests of cultural authenticity in this context.

In Rosemead, however, second, third and fourth generation Latina teachers were concerned I would judge them harshly and question *their* Mexican or Latino authenticity for not speaking Spanish fluently. This was new to me. As an outsider within, I was highly aware that language maintenance across the generations determines insider or outsider status within the Latino populace (Jimenez, 2004), but had never considered the shame third plus generation Latinas felt about not knowing the language and feelings of disappointing Latino families. Latina teachers in Rosemead were timid and would tell me they 'could understand Spanish, but couldn't speak it' and said their own parents did not want them to learn the language because of the negative stigma associated to it in the United States (Flores, 2011). My hidden academic privilege made them feel at ease to share these experiences. Since most of the Latina and Asian teachers in Rosemead shared an immigrant background, they were adamant that their Latino and Asian students should retain their native language while learning English. Latina teachers who were unable to retain Spanish felt an extreme sense of loss and wanted students to preserve their language.

I also had to become accustomed with different communication styles in order to be accepted by all teachers on campus. Jacobs-Huey (2002: 799) maintains that native researchers, when researching communities with which they culturally affiliate, are often asked to demonstrate their communicative competence, which 'entails fluency in the multiple languages and discourse styles characterizing as speech community, as well as an ability to adhere to specific discourse rules.' In multiracial schools I noticed black teachers would pause their conversations or hesitated speaking in Ebonics vernacular once I was at ear's length of their conversations, and would speak 'proper' English, highlighting my outsider status. As my time in the field progressed, African American teachers stopped self-policing the ways they expressed themselves when they realized I was an ally as a fellow educator and not there to judge their forms of speech or evaluate their teaching effectiveness. While African American teachers initially felt compelled to self-police their communication styles around me, I also had to be aware of Spanish puns and idioms around 1.5 and second-generation Latina/o respondents in order to maintain my legitimacy in the field and authenticity in their eyes. The following vignette from my field notes shows how I earned the nickname *La Venadita* and how Latina and Latino teachers spoke to me in the field:

[Did you know we call you La Venadita?]. I looked at the Latino teacher quizzically and asked, 'Why is my *apodo* [nickname] *La Venadita*? Little Doe? I don't get it.' The Latino teacher smirked after all of my erroneous guesses and finally said, 'Noooo.'

Porque cuando te quitas los lentes, no ves nada. [Nooo. Because when you take off your glasses, you can't see anything].

This interaction with a Latino teacher shows he used a play-on-words in Spanish of a little doe to signify the quotidian use of spectacles, and illustrates how my relationships with these teachers were contingent upon my understanding of Latino cultural puns. Over time, I came to find out that several Latina/o teachers referred to me this way when I was not present, functioning as an inclusionary mechanism. It was imperative I decipher these forms of expression to maintain my insider status with them.

In Latino culture it is commonplace to use endearing *apodos* [nicknames] to refer to people (Chong, 2002). Although I was given the nickname 'La Venadita' by Latina/o teachers, African American and white teachers often referred to me with the more clinical 'our student intern.' Increasing attention has been paid to how researchers of color studying minority communities make sense of and reflect on their own experiences because their 'situated knowledge' or lived experiences can better inform the way they interpret their data (Zinn, 2001). Reflexivity is the process by which a researcher understands how personal experience shapes his or her ideas and the way he or she attributes meaning, interprets action and conducts dialogues with informants (Mills, 1959: 3). My role with most African American, Asian and white teachers was much more formal than with Latinas/os teachers, primarily because the study focused on the lives of Latina teachers, but also because at times I was unable to pick up on cultural cues that are a vibrant part of African American and Asian American culture. For example, when I began my study three Asian American teachers invited me to Dim sum during lunch. While the Chinese origin teacher was translating all of the food items for me, the other two teachers were holding a conversation in Vietnamese. I felt like I was intruding. Although I became aware of different Asian dialects, language demonstrates both my outsider and insider status with these racial/ethnic groups, but being and outsider within and the hidden privilege are what granted me access to all teachers' work lives.

As a last point, Zinn (1979) argues that one of the politics of conducting research in racial/ethnic minority communities as an insider is exiting the field and 'breaking off relationships'. When I began the study, some Latina teachers would admonish me if I left the site for the day without a proper farewell. They interpreted it as a form of disrespect if I did not personally follow through and inform them of my departure. Many Latina teachers would say, 'Don't abandon us girl. Don't become all big time and forget about your people and where you came from because I've seen a lot of Latinos do that.' These cultural norms demonstrate a form of inclusion with teachers of color, but they also show teachers were well aware I would eventually have to leave the field as academia forces scholars to separate and exclude themselves from respondents. While teachers of color knew I would have to physically distance myself from them and the schools, they encouraged me to maintain connections to the community in other ways and not become

absorbed by the academic institution. With this knowledge in mind, I waited until the end of the school year when teachers would pack up their rooms and go on summer vacation to exit the field.

Conclusions

Few studies have examined the methodological concerns that arise for racial/ethnic minority scholars conducting field research in multiracial organizations and schools. As an 'outsider within', I was able to see and document the fleeting nature of privilege for racial/ethnic minorities as I conducted research in teaching, a gendered and feminized occupation. As a Mexican scholar that occupies a racially ambiguous status in US racial hierarchies,⁹ it became clear participants accorded me a *hidden privilege* not granted to all upwardly mobile racial/ethnic minority professionals. While Williams (1992) documents a 'glass escalator' for white men in teaching, I identify a 'hidden privilege' for upwardly mobile women of color that have broken through to high status occupations such as law, medicine and academia, and reveal their status in domains held in lower prestige. As Tomaskovic-Devey (1993) argues, the perceived status of an occupation may change, especially as its employees' gender and racial composition fluctuates. Thus, the prestige attributed to the occupation by society and social actors determines how those individuals will perceive and inscribe meanings on to the bodies of others. My positionality gave me a unique space to witness how it feels to be given privilege, not racial privilege, but a concealed privilege due to occupational status. Villenas (1996: 726) suggests academic Latinas/os 'do not move from marginalization to new positions of privilege associated with university affiliation... We do not suddenly become powerful in our new identities and roles as university researchers... As Chicanas/os and ethnographers of color, we carry our baggage with us.'

I carry this baggage too. In daily interactions in public with people at the store, the bank, or when I take my mother to her doctors' appointments, I fall under the image of the stereotypical Latina, poor and uneducated, and get treated as such. However, within the context of multiracial elementary schools when I revealed I was a doctoral candidate I was treated similarly to a white-middle-class individual. I received a small taste of privilege. This hidden privilege became visible to me because I was conducting field research in teaching, which is demoted as a semi-profession in US society and exhibits distinct inequality regimes (Acker, 2006). It also became visible because, although these schools largely employed women and racial/ethnic minority teachers, they were still working in institutions and organizations that privilege whiteness. This type of hidden privilege, however, is not the same as male privilege, white privilege or the 'invisible knapsack', as McIntosh (1988) describes, because these are granted and received consciously and unconsciously daily. They are also built into the social structure, are hegemonic, and are reproduced and upheld by all members of society regardless of their own social location. Individuals themselves may not even be conscious of the privilege they are

receiving because they do not see it. The hidden privilege, on the other hand, resembled a small and concealed coin purse and was not automatic because a conscious effort had to be made by me to announce it. It was also temporary and does not travel to other elite spaces. It took years of schooling to obtain and it is only granted when it is verbally revealed. However, it is possible that in other organizations, such as a corporate office, law firm or an affluent school district, I would be mistaken for a paralegal or a clerical assistant and still not get accorded or see privilege.

Because elementary schools are a subset of larger institutions and organizations, the findings in this paper have import for other white-collar workplaces. This analysis on hidden privilege was feasible precisely because respondents interpreted my ethnic background and gender in many ways, and because of my age and the prestige differential in our occupations. Because in the respondents' minds I was 'too young' to be a doctoral candidate at an elite institution, it gave me weight to counteract some debilitating stereotypes, but only for an instant and only while in this context. When respondents attempted to guess my role in their schools, they never presumed I was a doctoral candidate, rather, their minds focused on racialized and gendered assumptions. These labels and roles I found quickly changed once I informed participants I was working towards a PhD and aimed to become a college professor. Age *and* the prestige tied to a doctoral degree ultimately gave me access to daily interactions between students, families and all teachers. Although I had systems in place to offer me support in making sense of and addressing these issues, doctoral programs can incorporate mechanisms such as role-playing activities based on some of the scenarios that developed in ethnographic readings that emphasize the vicissitudes of entrance and dealing with refusals of various sorts. Herein lies the paradox of an upwardly mobile woman of color in multiracial organizations and schools: Being a racial/ethnic minority academic in predominantly nonwhite schools and occupations may refute, but also reify, larger patterns of social inequality such as maintaining white racial privilege and the myth of meritocracy in place.

Notes

1. I use the term Latina/o to refer to teachers who were born in Latin America or had ancestors from Latin America that migrated to the US from geographical regions such as Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. In some cases I also use Chicana, a term that notes at least one foreign-born parent from Mexico.
2. Used to refer to the US-born children of immigrants that are granted automatic citizenship.
3. Chicana/o was a negative political label that became re-appropriated during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s to signify a political identity of empowerment. It is used to identify those born in the United States that have some form of Mexican lineage.
4. Interviewee breakdown: 20 Latinas; 5 Latinos; 10 black; 10 Asian; and 5 white.
5. The IRB informed me that I did not need district approval because I was selecting one school within each district. Towards the end of my fieldwork the principal at Rosemead

- informed me that I had to fill out district paperwork to ensure the anonymity of my respondents, which I successfully completed. I followed all protocol required. I have changed the names of the schools and teachers to ensure complete anonymity.
6. Principals did not require that I get fingerprinted again or do another TB test given my long history with the SAUSD, even though I said I would.
 7. Mrs. Franco's (30) close cousin, with whom I had previously chaperoned a class fieldtrip, set up a group blind date.
 8. A Mexican expression applied to an older, unmarried woman meaning that it would be difficult for them to get married and start a family.
 9. The Mexican origin population has held a racially ambiguous status in the US racial hierarchy. Today, most scholars group the Mexican population into an ethnic category, and at times subsume them under the pan-ethnic labels of Latino or Hispanic. Others suggest that they are a racialized minority (Barrera, 2008).

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Author’s Biography

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