Qual Sociol (2011) 34:313–335
DOI 10.1007/s11133-011-9189-x

Racialized Tokens: Latina Teachers Negotiating, Surviving and Thriving in a White Woman's Profession

Glenda Marisol Flores

Published online: 1 April 2011
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2011

Abstract Previous scholarship on tokenism in professional occupations analyzes the ways white men exclude white women in male-dominated jobs. This study provides a glimpse of one organization, elementary schools, where white women exclude Latina women in a feminized occupation. Drawing on multiple methodologies, this paper analyzes Latina teachers' workplace experiences in Santa Ana, a Southern California Mexican immigrant city. The article compares the experiences of Latina teachers working at one school where over 70% of teachers are of Latina origin and three schools where 20% of teachers are Latinas. The author coins the term 'racialized tokens' to illustrate how the inextricable link of race, gender and class combine to shape the workplace experiences of Latina teachers who work as numerical minorities among a majority of white colleagues. Since Latina teachers are 'racialized tokens' in these spaces, the author argues that in the presumably post-racial era of diversity and multiculturalism in the U.S., Latina teachers do not long for racial integration with white women in their workplaces, rather, they choose to self-segregate because of the comfort and safety self-segregation provides.

Keywords Latina teachers · Racialized tokens · Elementary schools, Workplace ethnography · Intersectionality

Early feminist scholarship of women entering professional occupations in the 1970s examined various ways men have excluded women in the workplace (Kanter 1977; Lorber 1984; Cassell 1998). Studies of women breaking boundaries and entering male dominated professions such as law, medicine and managerial occupations examined how gender hierarchies were reproduced, albeit differently, through the social organization of the workplace (Lorber 1984; Kanter 1977; Epstein 1993; Cassell 1998). This scholarship centered on the experiences of white men and women, but conclusions were thought to apply to all men and women regardless of race or class status. Relatively few sociologists

G. M. Flores (✉)
Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, 3620 S. Vermont Avenue, Kaprielian Hall 352, Los Angeles, CA 90089, USA
e-mail: gmflores@usc.edu

have looked at the dynamics of inequality that professional Latinas encounter at the workplace (exceptions include García-López 2008; Hite 2007; Ochoa 2007). This is peculiar when one considers that teaching is the profession that has opened up the most to women of color, and because today, Latinas are the fastest growing group of non-white teachers in the United States (Feistritzer 2005; California Department of Education 2008).[1] What are the workplace experiences of Latina women who are making inroads into a traditionally white women's occupation?

This study examines the workplace experiences of Latina teachers working alongside white women teachers in Santa Ana, a Mexican immigrant city in Orange County. In particular, I compare the workplace experiences of Latina teachers who work in one school where they constitute a numerical majority with the experiences of Latina teachers who work in schools where there is a token representation of Latina teachers. Although the percentage of college educated Latinas[2] is still small relative to the white population, there is a growing number of college educated Latinas living in the United States who are now entering the teaching profession (Current Population Survey 2007).[3] This has triggered a browning of teachers, particularly in the state of California. In California alone, the percentage of K-12 teachers who are white decreased from 83% in 1981 to 69% in 2010, while the percentage of Latino/a teachers increased from 5.9% in 1981 to 17.4% in 2010 (CDE 2010).[4]

Historically, white men in professional occupations resorted to gender discrimination, sexual harassment and subtle snubs to marginalize white women in male-dominated occupations (Kanter 1977). This paper shows a similar form of discrimination where white female teachers in this study also discriminate against Latina teachers through their color-blind racial outlook (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Although it is the era of diversity and multiculturalism in the United States, recent years have been characterized by strong anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant politics. Winant (2001) argues that "color-blind" racial policies and largely symbolic multiculturalism are new forms of racial exclusion and inequality. Through ethnographic research in small workplace settings the present study offers insights into ways Latina teachers become alienated in social interactions with white women teachers through subtle racist interactional forms that occur daily in schools and workplaces. I argue that "racialized tokenism" occurs when Latina teachers are a numerical minority among white teachers because anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiments permeate their work environments.

This paper addresses the following sociological questions: What happens in the workplace when there is a token representation of Latina teachers working amongst white women in Latino schools? Conversely, what happens when Latina teachers enter a work site where teachers are also Latinas and where students, parents, staff and surrounding community are also ethnically and culturally similar? Do Latina teachers' experiences vary according to racial/ethnic composition of teachers at the school site? Through in-depth

[1] Just as Latinas are the fastest growing racial/ethnic minority group to enter teaching, Latino students are over half of the school aged population in CA and are expected to grow exponentially within the next couple of decades nationwide (Gutierrez 2004; Fry and Gonzales 2008).

[2] Throughout this paper I use the term Latina instead of other Latin American political identifications. I acknowledge that Latina is an umbrella term that sweeps all personal experiences under one ethnic label.

[3] In 1996 the top discipline that undergraduate Latinas received a degree in was education (Suárez 2002).

[4] From 1981–2010, in the state of California, the percentage of Asian teachers increased from 3.4% to 5.2% while black teachers decreased from 6.2% to 4.2% respectively (CDE 2010). Data from the Schools and Staffing Survey from National Center for Education Statistics (2003–2004) show that in the U.S., Whites accounted for 84%; Blacks 7.4%; Asian 1.4%; and Latinos 6% of teachers. White women are the majority of teachers, but Latinos/as, are the fastest growing minority group that is entering the profession. Although African Americans outnumber Latina/o teachers, their numbers have been dwindling over the years especially in states like California and in immigrant cities like Santa Ana.

interviews and ethnographic work in the teachers' lounge at two Santa Ana schools I examine the inextricable link between race, gender and class for Latina teachers employed in a traditionally white, middle-class, and feminized occupation. The work experiences of Latina teachers in two different schools demonstrate tokenism is both racialized and gendered.

Literature Review

In her seminal book, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Kanter (1977) made a compelling argument about proportional representation and its impact on the workplace experiences of white women in token positions. Kanter (1977) argued that women who worked in male-dominated, professional-managerial jobs as numerical minorities experienced a series of uncomfortable situations such as social invisibility, boundary heightening, and performance pressures. In order for supportive alliances to develop among women who were numerical minorities, their numbers had to increase and reach a "tipping point," shifting the group culture incorporated by dominants. Kanter wrote,

> A mere shift in absolute numbers, then, as from one to two tokens, could potentially reduce stresses in a token's situation even while relative numbers of women remained low. But two were also few enough to be rather easily divided and kept apart. It would appear that larger numbers are necessary for supportive alliances to develop in the token context. (p. 238)

Kanter argued her findings were not just applicable to white women professionals; rather, she postulated these interactions were applicable to dominants (numerical majorities) and minorities who were "rare and scarce" in any work environment.

Kanter's arguments were retested and explored in different occupations between white men and women. For instance, Lorber (1984, 1993) and Cassell (1998) built on her work with their studies of white women doctors. As white women entered the medical profession, they soon found that they were gender-typed into less lucrative and prestigious specialties. Lorber (1993), in particular, showed that although women were no longer subject to formal gender discrimination and could achieve better staff appointments, they encountered invisible barriers such as the glass ceiling which limited their mobility. This is what Lorber termed the Salieri phenomenon: a simultaneous mixture of praise and snubs of women's ability to lead. In addition, Cassell (1998) showed that some established male doctors treated female doctors as equals, but those who saw women as threatening competitors used social weapons such as supportive discouragement and condescending chivalry to keep them subordinate. These studies showed that although white men doctors professed neutrality or good intentions towards white women, gender biases precluded them from actively supporting or including them.

Following Kanter's (1977) analysis of "boundary heightening," Pierce (1996) showed the unwritten rules about social interaction in the office workspace and social events between white men and women attorneys. Pierce (1996) found that although white men and women attorneys socialized with one another within tiers, they rarely socialized with individuals between them. Employees on the lower end of the occupational ladder, such as paralegals and secretaries, rarely interacted with men attorneys is formal, firm-wide social occasions. Whenever intermingling occurred it was initiated by men attorneys. These studies emphasized how systematic reproduction of gender inequality between white women and men professionals varied based on organization type through subtle interactions.

Intersectionality and Organizations

Sociological scholarship shows that because organizations are neither gender-neutral (Acker 1990) nor race-neutral (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993), the workplace experiences of men and women tokens are not equivalent and change depending on race-gender interactions and the organization of the work setting. Building upon Williams's (1992) argument that white men experienced a "glass escalator" effect when working in nontraditional male occupations such as nursing and teaching, Wingfield (2009) argued the glass escalator is a racialized and gendered concept because black men do not gain authority over white women in the nursing profession. While Williams' (1992) study suggested enduring advantages accrued to members of privileged groups when working as numerical minorities, Wingfield (2009) showed gendered racism and racial stereotypes of black men adversely affected their upwardly mobile trajectories within nursing. Therefore, this study examines how race, gender and class intersect in different ways to shape the experiences of Latina tokens in teaching because the Latina teachers in this study do not gain parity and basic comfort in white female dominated schools.

Patricia Hill Collins (1990) notes that critical differences have persisted within the population of employed women. Black feminist theory, "multiracial feminism" (Zinn and Dill 1996; Zinn et al. 1986), and triple jeopardy[5] (Browne 1999; Browne and Askew 2006) show us that gender, race, class, and sexual orientation are key links to understanding a "matrix of domination" in which women of color experience oppression at different levels and in different ways as opposed to white women. While white women professionals in Kanter's (1977) study were marginalized by gender discrimination, Latina teachers' positionality as upwardly mobile Latina women who must navigate a traditionally white-middle-class mainstream organization may produce a different lived reality.

In addition to intersectionality, scholars suggest inequality in the workplace does not depend solely on race and gender, but varies depending on the particular organization of the work setting (Reskin 2000; Acker 2006). Reskin (2000) contends, "Inequality at work does not just happen; it occurs through the acts and the failures to act by the people who run and work for organizations" (p.707). Acker (2006) adds to this argument by claiming that all organizations have "inequality regimes" which serve to maintain class, gender, and racial hierarchies within a particular organization and are linked to inequality in the surrounding society. More importantly, inequality regimes are fluid and tend to change depending on the organization.

Women of Color in the Professions

Latinas living in the United States have historically been concentrated in worksites segregated by race and gender. Most scholarship on Latinas and work focuses on immigrant Latinas and their experiences in service and blue-collar occupations, such as domestic or factory work (Menjivar 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Zavella 1987; Ruiz 1998). These studies focus on "hypersegregated" feminized occupations (Catanzarite and Trimble 2008) and "brown collar" jobs (Catanzarite 2000). This is in large part due to the fact that Latina

[5] Triple jeopardy and triple oppression (Segura 1990) are used to describe the experiences of women of color working in blue and white-collar jobs and the interplay among race, class and gender whose cumulative effects place women of color in a subordinate social and economic position relative to men of color and the majority white population.

women have traditionally occupied jobs at the bottom rungs of the occupational hierarchy due to race and class stratification in the United States (Barrera 1979; Segura 1989, 1990). Prior research has noted success in "pink collar" jobs for second-generation Latina women (Smith 2006; López 2003).

Scholarship on Latinas in the professions is scant (Browne and Askew 2006) but is emerging (see García-López 2008; Hite 2007; Ochoa 2007). Most studies of women of color in the professions tend to focus on working class women that defied all odds, obtained professional careers, and work with white colleagues in predominantly white organizations. Studies of women of color in the professions highlight struggles they face over whether they should hide or express their cultural and ethnic heritage in white spaces (Hite 2007; Livers 2006). Studies have noted that African-American women in management are subtly told to hide their ethnic heritage by being asked to tie their hair back or told not to wear attire that looks "ethnic" so as not to cause discomfort for white co-workers (Livers 2006). Latina business professionals explain feeling that they must navigate two cultural contexts: their own Latina heritage and the mainstream white culture they are exposed to at their jobs (Hite 2007). Moreover, gendered racist images of a particular racial/ethnic group may impact relationships with co-workers and experiences in the workplace (Wingfield 2009; García-López 2008). García-López (2008) highlights that Latina lawyers attempted to either diminish or subdue cultural aspects in their appearance to avoid being misidentified and racialized as service workers in corporate law firms. These studies emphasize how racial/ethnic professional women hide or must compromise their ethnic culture in companies or professions.

Aside from navigating cultural conflicts in white work environments, studies also note that women from poorer backgrounds who achieve upward mobility exhibit a deeper sense of debt and obligation to family, friends and their communities (Higginbotham and Weber 1992). Higginbotham and Weber (1992) show how race and gender shape the class experience of upward mobility for black and white women. While upwardly mobile white women exhibited a more individualistic and meritocratic orientation, black women narrated it was an obligation to give back to their communities. More recently, Agius Vallejo and Lee (2009) argue that professional Latinos/as from working-class backgrounds use an immigrant narrative framework to give back to their communities even if it means financial hardship for themselves.

Much less is known about racial/ethnic minority professionals working in professional work sites where racial/ethnic minorities predominate. Segura's (1990) study of Chicana secretaries shows how these women felt unwelcomed by their white female co-workers and by their white supervisors. These Latinas suffered social ostracism and reported constant racial discrimination and sexual harassment. Most felt that they were negatively affected by Latina stereotypes and that they needed to "prove" themselves more (Segura 1989, 1992). In stark contrast, Chicanas and Mexicanas in minority female-dominated jobs did not feel socially isolated by their co-workers and reported comfortable social relationships with one another (Segura 1994).

Santa Ana Schools

In the midst of Orange County is Santa Ana, a Mexican immigrant city surrounded by several white affluent cities notoriously known for their anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiment. Gustavo Arellano shows this sentiment in his syndicated column, "¡Ask a Mexican!", where he satirically responds to anti-Mexican (and anti-Latino) opinions in the *OC Weekly.* Today Santa Ana is a Mexican city, but it was not always that way. In the 1970s, the city was primarily white and Latinos comprised only 30% of the population

(Bureau of the U.S. Census 2005). White flight ensued in the 1980s with the massive influx of Mexican immigrants settling the area. The trend continued for the next three decades, so that by 2007, nearly 79% of the overall population of the area was Latino/a with a predominance of Mexican immigrants (87%) and Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants to a much smaller degree (O.C. Almanac 2007). It is a city divided by socio-economic class stratification between established and newer immigrants. The tensions between recent immigrant and established Latinos goes beyond the community and seeps into schools, exemplified in Moreno's (2005) film, "Recalling Orange County," which documents the ousting of an immigrant rights, bilingual education advocate and political figure from the school district.[6]

There are 36 elementary schools in Santa Ana serving predominantly foreign and U.S born Latino, urban, working-class children. The school with the smallest Latino population boasts a 96% Latino student body (S.A.U.S.D. 2007). The teacher composition has also changed with nearly a 30% increase of Latinas working in this district since the 1970s (CDE 2010). Although more Santa Ana schools were built and opened in the early 2000s to alleviate overcrowding, schools have experienced lower enrollment as many Latino families are leaving to the Inland Empire for more affordable housing. Some have moved back to their country of origin altogether. Moreover, district and state policies on testing requisites have beleaguered schools. These issues were discussed at great length by all Latina teachers interviewed, particularly in the teachers' lounge of the two schools selected for this study: Kindred and Citrine Elementary.[7]

At the hub of all this turmoil and change are the staff and children at two school sites. Kindred was selected for this study because it fit the profile of a Latina dominant school—over 70% of teachers were of Latino background. At this site there were 45 teachers: 26 Latinas; eight Latinos; nine white women; one white man; and one Filipino man. The school is a fenced in building located at the end of a block of apartment complexes inhabited mostly by working class Latino families. At Citrine Elementary, on the other hand, over 80% of the teachers are white women and also serve low-income Latino families. At Citrine, there are 38 teachers: 33 white women; one white man; one Asian woman; and one African American woman. Only two Latina teachers are employed at this school. The administration at both schools had arranged a series of beautification programs in order to eliminate the graffiti on the handball courts and to add greenery.

I find answers to the following related research questions: What happens when Latina teachers enter white women's occupational turf in Latino schools? How does the racial/ethnic proportional representation of Latina and white women in schools influence workplace interactions and experiences of Latina teachers?

Methods and Research Description

This study implements a multiple methods research design that analyzes in-depth interview data with 20 Latina teachers and 45 hours of participant observation data collected during the 2006–2007 academic school year at Kindred and Citrine Elementary in the Santa Ana

[6] The 2003 recall of Latino immigrant activist and Santa Ana School Board Member, Nativo Lopez, by white residents of the area and middle-class Latinos was the epitome of anti-Mexican immigrant sentiment and was battled out in the schools. The issue at hand was the elimination of bilingual education.

[7] All schools and teachers are given pseudonyms.

Unified School District of Orange County.[8] I was able to secure my target number of interviews (10) at Kindred, but I had to visit three separate white-dominant schools in order to recruit all 10 interviews of Latina teachers who work among white colleagues. By definition, my study required that these interviewees be a numerical minority at their school sites. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions on two broad topics: motivations for entering the teaching profession[9] and workplace experiences. I conducted all interviews, with each one lasting between one and three hours. Teachers opted to be interviewed after school or during their lunch hour in their classrooms. I interviewed only one teacher in the loud hubbub of downtown Santa Ana. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for the analysis.

I conducted participant observation in both Kindred and Citrine's teachers' lounges. I also attended the Literacy Day conference and the Halloween parade at Kindred and the Fall Festival at Citrine. I averaged roughly 2–3 hours of ethnographic participant observation a week over a period of six months. Gaining entry was not difficult as I had several immediate contacts within the school district. A "product" of Santa Ana schools and a former employee of the district, I was on the road towards becoming a teacher and dreamed of 1 day going back to teach at my old elementary school. I am an "insider" conducting a study of Latina teachers in my own community. It was when I interviewed Mrs. Lomeli—a second-generation, Mexican-American teacher—who code-switched between Spanish and English throughout our interview that I saw my Latina subjectivity as a strength in my analysis. Thus my ethnicity and gender facilitated my ongoing relationships with informants (Zinn 2001).

I selected the schools by returning to my former employer and asking the principal if she knew of schools willing to participate. She referred me to Mrs. Bermudez, a Latina teacher at Citrine. Mrs. Bermudez served as my initial informant and gave me the names of schools that fit my criteria, specifically mentioning Kindred to me. I met with principals and explained to them that studies on Latina professionals were scant and I wanted to document their experiences. Two Latina principals granted my entry right away. However, when I introduced my project to two white principals, they asked me to visit the union or seek district approval. I did the latter. After interviewing one teacher at each school I used snowball sampling to obtain other interviews.

Strauss's (1987) coding scheme was used to evaluate the data. Each transcript and set of field notes was read various times and anatomized into key themes. I also shared transcripts and field notes and discussed them with peers. Teachers in my sample self-identified in various ways. Many even specified the different gradations of their Latino background as shown in Table 1.

With the exception of three teachers who were born in Mexico and came to the United States before the age of 11 and a teacher who was born in Peru and migrated to the U.S. at 15, all other teachers were second-generation U.S. born children of Latino immigrants. Most Latina teachers I interviewed were relatively young; their ages ranged from 28 to 63 and the average age was 36.5. Their number of years teaching ranged from 3 to 40 years. All teachers in my sample were bilingual but only 11 of them had obtained a bilingual education teaching credential. Over half of the teachers I interviewed had ties to the city, either being Santa Ana natives themselves, living in an adjacent city, or having once attended Santa Ana schools.

[8] I revisited both of my schools during the 2009–2010 academic year. Both Latina teachers are still employed at Citrine and still work among a majority of white colleagues. I returned to Kindred for their yearly Mexican Independence Day carnival. Affected by the economic crisis, however, Mrs. Ledesma was no longer there. The school is still Latina-dominant in terms of its teacher distribution.

[9] This part of my research is covered in a forthcoming manuscript.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of Latina teachers

Pseudonym	Age	Place of birth	Ethnicity/race	Grade	Total years teaching	Years in current school
Latina Dominant School						
Ms. Fuentes[a]	30	Santa Ana, CA	Mexican-American	3	6	6
Ms. Ponce	28	Santa Ana, CA	Latina	k	8	7
Mrs. Lomeli	31	Santa Ana, CA	Mexican-American	1	7	7
Ms. Ramirez	28	Santa Ana, CA	Mexican/Salvadoran	5	5	5
Mrs. Anderson	32	Peru	Hispanic/Peruvian	2	8	7
Mrs. Valenzuela	52	East L.A.	Mexican	4	25	5
Mrs. Cervantes	34	Santa Ana, CA	Hispanic	k	3	1
Ms. Ledesma	29	Tulare, CA	Mexican/American	5	5	5
Ms. Villalobos	29	Garden Grove, CA	Hispanic	2	6	2
Mrs. Aguirre	29	Mexico	Mexican/Guatemalan	4	6	4
White Dominant Schools						
Ms. Benavidez	31	Los Angeles, CA	Mexican-American	1	7	3
Mrs. Gonzalez	42	New Mexico[b]	Mexican	1	10	7
Mrs. Blanco	50	Mexico	Hispanic	2	11	10
Ms. Pedroza	37	Los Angeles, CA	Mexican American	1	13	13
Mrs. Cardenas	40	CA	Chicana	k	14	14
Mrs. Chambers	50	Tucson, Arizona	Puerto Rican	3	25	25
Mrs. Barney	63	Austin, TX	Hispanic	k	40	38
Ms. Tienda	28	Mexico[b]	Mexican	4	5	1
Ms. Galvan	33	Los Angeles, CA	Mexican	4	11	10
Mrs. Prieto-Wilke	34	Santa Ana, CA	Mexican	1	9	9
Avg.	36.5					

N=20

[a] Teacher marital status is denoted by title. Ms. indicates single while Mrs. indicates married or divorced

[b] Raised in Santa Ana

In this paper, I review Latina teachers' responses to questions about their workplace experiences with white and Latina women, comparing whether differences exist according to the racial/ethnic breakdown of teachers at the schools. I focus specifically on, cultural conflicts, race relations, ethnic expression, lunchroom interactions, and on-the-job rapport with supervisors and co-workers.

Findings

Workplace Experiences at Kindred Elementary

Relationships with Co-workers and Supervisors

Until the early 2000s, Kindred Elementary was a white teacher-dominant school. Mrs. Lomeli was one of the first Latina teachers to be hired at Kindred. During our interview she

explained tensions existed at Kindred when she first started working there because "it was very segregated," with white teachers sitting on one side of the lounge and Latina teachers sitting on the other. However, Mrs. Lomeli believed once the school became Latina teacher dominant, the school atmosphere changed to reflect friendly social relations amongst Latina co-workers. These workplace relations were similar to those described by the clerical workers in Segura's (1990) study of Latina secretaries who worked alongside other minority women. All Latina teachers I interviewed at Kindred expressed an overwhelming sense of satisfaction in their relations with administration and co-workers and they described this school as a "second home"—a home in which Latina teachers were seen an extended kin. Mrs. Anderson, a blond-haired, blue-eyed teacher from Peru, described her co-workers as a "very cohesive team" and "a very supportive staff." Mrs. Ponce said, "The staff is always helping each other and is always there for one another. If we need any help or any ideas to use in our classroom the teachers are all there." She went on to say, "Here I feel like I have an idea and I can share it without even getting criticized." Mrs. Aguirre, a fourth-grade teacher that once worked at Citrine, described the lack of mentorship she received from white teachers when she began her teaching career and was learning the ropes. After working at Citrine for two years she asked to be transferred to Kindred, and, unlike Citrine, she explained that team-teaching and sharing lessons plans were common practices at her new school.

> I think overall the teachers are nicer here. They are friendlier. When I first started working here everybody wanted to help out. Everyone was like, "If you need anything we'll be here. Just pop in we'll help you do it, we know you are new." Now we are doing a lot of team teaching so that's good. At Citrine, I don't think they were as friendly. I didn't fit in. It was harder to work with [white] teachers.

Mrs. Aguirre went on to explain that her experiences at a white-teacher dominant school were alleviated once a co-ethnic teacher was hired. It was this new Latina teacher whom she sought for advice and mentorship. Latina teachers at Kindred described feeling professionally supported, and a helpful and cooperative environment. These experiences extended to their relationships with administrators.

Latina teachers at Kindred Elementary explained that the principal, a Latina woman, had an "open door policy." In one of my visits to the lounge, I witnessed Latina teacher gathering names for an Avon party hosted by the principal's daughter. Mrs. Anderson said, "I'm very happy with administration. They help a lot. So generally I think I have pretty good relations with them."

Positive social relations among the teachers at Kindred allowed them to put together a series of activities for Latino parents and children. Latina teachers reported that their principal implemented a "Program for Success" encouraging them to enroll in at least two committees. Among them were the yearly Mexican Independence Day carnival and the Literacy Day conference. I attended the Literacy Day conference which was held on a Saturday for Latino parents. I observed Latina teachers manning the registration tables, speaking to parents in Spanish and guiding them to their appropriate rooms. During lunchtime, Latina teachers, the Latina principal and I formed an assembly line and ensured all attendees received lunch. We conversed with parents and children in line and asked them what ingredients they wanted in their tacos after they picked up their tortillas and selected their meat from the hired *taquero* [taco cook]. The event ended with an Aztec dance coordinated by a Latino teacher and performed by the fifth graders for their parents. The parents looked on enthused and clapped throughout the performance.

Spreading the Workload

When asked about race and their workplace experiences with white teachers, Latina teachers at Kindred reported they took “race for granted” and did not know “how good” they had it in this occupational niche. When I mentioned this was a white female-dominated occupation, I was met with winces and cringed foreheads because several Latina teachers had only experienced working at Kindred. Several of them indicated they did not *feel* race and described white teachers at Kindred who accepted their Latino culture, but also noted they did not know if white teachers felt like they were being “taken over.” Mrs. Fuentes and Mrs. Lomeli clearly elucidate this point. According to Mrs. Fuentes, “I don’t feel like I’m in a white-dominant field where I’m a minority. I actually feel [Latina women] are the majority.” Both agreed that because there were many other Latina teachers in the profession, their experiences were different because they did not experience the hardships other Latinas did in white-collar occupations. Mrs. Lomeli notes:

> Mine are different because of the percentage of Hispanic people I’m working with. I don’t think anywhere else in the workforce, I mean white collar, do you get the percentage of Hispanic colleagues that I do or that you work for because we are working for the parents. You work for that percentage of Hispanic parents so I think that it’s very different.

Mrs. Lomeli acknowledged that her experiences working as a teacher at a Latina-dominant school were more positive because of the number of Latina co-workers and the Latino community she worked for. The fact that she worked for Latinos and with a majority of Latinas eased racial tension. She also said that she had an aunt that had a completely different experience because she was a numerical racial minority at her school:

> I can tell you that my aunt, who is a year and a half younger than I am, teaches in Tustin Unified. She’s the only Hispanic in her whole school. She’s had a lot of issues because she was not welcomed at the table and she was seen as an outsider because… she came from a completely different cultural background. She’s had some issues and not a lot of support from the administrator. She’s dying to come to Santa Ana.

In this work environment, Latina teachers felt accepted and appreciated for developing cultural activities for the children. To them, the extra workload was perceived as a source of professional gratification.

Since most Latina teachers at Kindred exhibited a missionary zeal to give back to the community, several of them over-extended themselves and participated in more than two committees. For instance, Ms. Ramirez reported she was in more than five and was honored to partake in them. “I believe we are required to participate in one committee but I’m involved in more than one committee. I see that it’s an honor that they are inviting me to come into these meetings where I think we are doing positive change for our school,” she said. Other teachers, such as Ms. Ledesma, took the initiative to start events that were not held previously because they thought the children would benefit from them and because they had support from fellow colleagues. “I’m going to start ‘Read Across America’…I’m going to [bring] guest readers [here]. Nobody asked me to do it, but I just think that’s a really important activity. That takes a lot of time, but I like to see school wide activities happening…for the kids.”

Latina teachers at Kindred acknowledged that participating in more committees or holding special events took extra time and effort, but they did not see this as an added burden because collaboration was the norm and they were able to spread the workload.

They worked in an environment that was not competitive or exclusive, but rather a place where their energy could be spent giving back to the community.

The Teachers Lounge at Kindred Elementary

> *"I enjoy the teacher's lounge. I enjoy my table. I enjoy just laughing my lungs out."*-Mrs. Puentes

Food Sharing

The first time I set foot in and sat down in the teachers lounge at Kindred, I was immediately struck by the extreme sense of familism, informality, and fun amongst the entire staff. Latina teachers at Kindred described that they "had to be in the lounge" and felt that their day was "not complete" if they did not have lunch with the rest of their colleagues and "extended family." This teacher's lounge was vibrant: jokes were told, lunches were shared, Latino culture was overt, and occupational hierarchies were not apparent.

Latina teachers at Kindred Elementary expressed their familism through the sharing of food. Familism among Latinos is defined as placing importance on both the nuclear family and extended family members (Segura and Pierce 1993). I argue that blood-ties were not necessary for Latina teachers to treat one another as a family member, but that culture, especially "food-sharing," is what bound Latina teachers together. "Food-sharing" is the act of self-cooking food or buying food for others and seemed to bring teachers together. Festivities such as potlucks forged a communal family and closer bonds. For instance, on one occasion, Mrs. Puentes and Mrs. Denver (a white teacher) put together an extravagant meal for all teachers. When I walked in the lounge that day, the lounge had been decorated with red and green table covers and both teachers encouraged me to take some food and sit with them.

The first-grade team of teachers would take a 15-minute walk in order to encourage one another to stay healthy before eating their meal. They also implemented a rotating lunch schedule where one of the teachers would bring in a meal for the team on Fridays. On another occasion during my observations in the lounge, I noticed Mrs. Aguirre brought lunch for her fellow teacher Mrs. Aceves as I sat in the same table. According to my fieldnotes:

> There were about eleven Latina teachers in the lounge. Mrs. Aceves came in and sat next to Mrs. Aguirre who had already set up their dining area with napkins. Mrs. Aceves made sandwiches for both women and took them out of her lunch-pouch. She told Mrs. Aguirre the items that were in the sandwiches and Mrs. Aguirre said that she came prepared. She reached into her purse and took out an avocado. Mrs. Aceves began to laugh and smiled at her comrade.

Expression of Latino Culture

In the lounge, Latina teachers comfortably expressed their culture in the work setting and often times spoke of incorporating Latino icons or Latino cuisines into their curriculum. Teachers at Kindred worked against a "cultural deficiency" model of education and replaced it with a "cultural funds of knowledge model" (González et al. 2005); in other words, they were able to successfully implement Latino culture into their professional lives. One day Ms. Ramirez said she wanted to hold a lesson about heroes and wanted to include "El Chapulin Colorado" (an eminent Mexican television personality). Ms. Ramirez was

very animated as she spoke about her lesson plan and at one point enacted scenes from the show in the middle of the lounge. Latina teachers also made an effort to incorporate home items that would be familiar to the children into their lesson plans. Mrs. Prado said she was going to teach her students how to count by using Mexican pinto beans because kids would have those in their homes. Unlike previous scholarship that notes that racial/ethnic minorities attempt to disguise their ethnic culture in professional contexts with white colleagues (Livers 2006), Latina teachers were very creative in how they inculcated Latino culture into their workplace environment.

Just as Latinas incorporated Latino culture into their lesson plans, they also described feeling "comfortable" to speak Spanish in the lounge. Latina teachers understood that speaking Spanish in the classroom was a controversial topic. They often said they followed California state policies about Spanish-language instruction in their classrooms, only using Spanish to explain a difficult concept or with students whose parents filled out a waiver to be in a bilingual transitional program. Others said they used Spanish to ease the transition for newcomers in their classrooms. However, Latina teachers themselves were able to let loose in the lounge and in their daily interactions with co-teachers and other school staff, speaking Spanish freely. In fact, my field notes were permeated with Latinas code-switching between Spanish and English constantly. Many of them heavily appreciated this aspect of their workplace because they had been admonished for speaking Spanish in school when they were children. Take for example the following friendly interaction between Latina teachers over avoiding meat for lent:

Mrs. Chávez: Ana, *¿qué estás comiendo*? [Ana, what are you eating?]
Ana: I took all the meat out. [in a whiny childish tone and with a chicken caesar salad in front of her]
Mrs. Chávez: I'm checking on you. [squinting eyes]
Ana: *Ay*, Cheli. [Oh, Cheli (an amiable name)]

This interaction shows Mrs. Chávez and Ana had a close relationship and did not hide their native language or their religion. Latina teachers and Latino staff always felt comfortable chiming in to one another's conversations in either language in the lounge.

However, this is not to say that Kindred's lounge was tension-free. Several of the Latina teachers I interviewed openly acknowledged there were teachers who expressed anti-immigrant views in the lounge. Although the Latina teachers I interviewed said they were tolerant of those teachers who had negative views of the children and the community, my participants were adamant that teachers who exhibited anti-immigrant sentiment should leave the school and work in a more affluent and white district instead. The following vignette illustrates this tension:

> Latina teachers expressed concern over the immigration raids that were occurring in the city. Mrs. Ponce told Ms. Fuentes and Mrs. Cervantes that some of the children in her classroom were traumatized because customs officials had deported their parents while they were in school. While her colleagues nodded in agreement, Alejandra, a Latina teacher, described as coming from a more affluent background, said about the kids, "Son burros y estupidos….Le voy hablar a la migra, y les voy a quitar el lunch-ticket para que no puedan comer. I would get the trucks and pick them up myself." [They are donkeys and stupid…I'm going to call immigration authorities and I am going to take away their lunch ticket so that they can't eat]. Mrs. Cervantes quickly interjected, "We don't appreciate those comments. Please keep those type of comments to yourself," and resumed talking to the Latina teachers sitting at her table.

Although most Latina and white teachers at Kindred empathized with Latino immigrant parents and their children, there were two Latina teachers who harbored anti-immigrant politics.

Occupational Hierarchies

Occupational hierarchies within the school were not apparent in the teachers lounge at Kindred. When asked who they sat with in the lounge most Latina teachers responded with "anyone that is in there." Teachers were not inhibited and did not separate by race at all. During my note-taking I was surrounded by white and Latina teachers constantly. Latina teachers at Kindred spoke to everyone, especially support staff, lunch ladies, the custodian, and the cafeteria manager, all of whom were Latino immigrants. "We're all the same here," reiterated Mrs. Lomeli during our interview, meaning that occupational status was not a basis for exclusion. On several of my visits I would find Latina teachers chatting and sharing their food with Ricardo, an immigrant Latino custodian. During the winter potluck before winter break, Martha—a Latina cafeteria manager—was sitting with both Latina and white teachers and was showing off the snowmen painted on her acrylic nails. On another occasion, the Latina lunch ladies put together a potluck for all of the teachers in the school. The lunch-room was filled with different types of Latin American foods. While the teachers ate the lunch ladies went outside and took care of the children; the roles reversed the following day. There was a mutual respect for all employees at this school, regardless of position held.

Workplace Experiences at Citrine and White-Dominant Schools

Relationships with Co-workers and Supervisors

Latina teachers working at Citrine and other white-dominant schools described having strained social relations at work. Being a numerical minority at their school left them feeling disempowered because they had to cede to white teachers' requests, impeding their ability to effectively reach to the community. Latina teachers at other white-dominant schools narrated similar events, both in their dissatisfaction with work routines and interactions in the teachers' lounge. All Latinas working in white-dominant schools reported cordial relationships with white teachers and often preceded their statements by negating racial conflict, alleging that they displayed a "professional" disposition with their white colleagues by rarely sharing information about their private lives, such as their families or immigrant background. While Mrs. Blanco and Mrs. Barney narrated they had no conflicts with white teachers, I discovered they often kept to themselves or to their small niche of supportive colleagues. Despite reporting cordial relationships with their white colleagues, I found Latina teachers were met with hostility when it came to collaborating with one another and holding cultural events for the children.

Constraining Latino Culture

Mrs. Bermudez recalled working at a Latina-dominant school where she did not have to hide her cultural heritage or her radical Latino political worldviews. However, once at Citrine, she found herself walking a cultural tightrope. She explained:

> I would wear César Chávez shirts, Zapatista shirts, my Chiapas stuff [to a Latina-dominant school] and they wouldn't say anything. My principal wouldn't say

> anything because: (a) they respected it [her culture] and (b) they knew what I was talking about. Now, I would never bring that here.

Mrs. Bermudez's sentiments echo Livers' (2006) findings on black women in management because she no longer freely expressed her culture or political views as she had when working alongside a majority of Latinas. Ms. Galvan indicated she felt some white teachers were ignorant about her culture, causing conflicts for her at the workplace:

> The problem that I see in this school and many schools too is that the [white] teachers just don't know about Latinos and about the culture and the acquisition of a second language. There is some ignorance going around I think.

When probed further about this Ms. Galvan responded with an anecdote regarding a play her class a performed about the life of César Chávez. When her students performed in a white teacher's class, the woman asked, "Why is she teaching about César Chávez?" Ms. Galvan retorted, "That is so ignorant, especially when you are talking about fourth grade California history and it is even in the history book!"

Unlike Latina teachers at Kindred who were able to comfortably express their Latino culture, Latina teachers at white-dominant schools had to defend their Latino culture, history and politics. Mrs. Bermudez and Ms. Galvan reported the downplaying of Latino culture not only affected Latina teachers, but also extended to the elimination of activities for the children. Latina teachers who wanted to hold Latino cultural events for the children lacked support. They often prepared cultural events alone or with a small cluster of other supportive teachers in their school. For instance, Mrs. Chalmers, a Puerto Rican teacher, described that when she would try to hold events like César Chávez or Mexican Independence Day, white teachers replied with: "This is not our culture, so why should [we] take time out of a busy school day to celebrate this." Events like the Halloween parade, talent show, and field trips were also cancelled because white teachers did not want to participate. Mrs. Cárdenas frustratingly added, "[The white teachers] no quieren hacer nada [don't want to do anything]." Mrs. Prieto-Wilke said their school had gone through some changes in administration upon the replacement of their old principal, a Latino man. According to the teachers at this site, this resulted in the elimination of cultural and community events because white teachers saw these events as bearing "no sense of importance" and the mandate "came from the top."

Extra Workload but for the Community

The lack of teacher support for community events led to minimal parental involvement. Yet, Latina teachers were frequently sought out by white teachers and confused parents to translate. In this sense, Latina teachers at white-dominant schools served as network and community liaisons for Latino parents and children. Unlike Latina teachers at Kindred who could distribute the work, Latina teachers at white-dominant schools were "stretched to the limit" (Miller and Chapa 2004). For instance, Mrs. Prieto-Wilke helped some families with immigration procedures such as making an audiotape of the question and answer portion for the naturalization test. Mrs. Chalmers searched tirelessly for a private tutor for a parent at a lower cost to help her daughter. However, other teachers like Mrs. Barney, the eldest teacher I interviewed, said she did not go out of her way anymore to help parents because of her age and because that type of atmosphere was not prevalent in the school.

Latina teachers did not initially perceive the aforementioned activities as extra work. Rather, they perceived the work as caring for the community and as a social responsibility

to give back and to empower "my people" and "my roots" as Ms. Tienda put it. When asked about this Ms. Galvan said:

> The things that I do are because I want to do them. Everything I do I choose to do… The underlying thing is deep inside, when there is nobody else, I do feel that responsibility. Somebody has to be there.

Although she perceived these tasks as a social responsibility, she felt "stressed out" because it was extra work to have close to 40 students in her class at one point since white teachers did not want or could not communicate well with immigrant "newcomers."

On top of her normal curriculum duties as a teacher, Mrs. Pedroza was asked to be the after-school program coordinator. While this was for added income, Mrs. Pedroza described this as a "very heavy task" because she had to stay extra hours and oversee the logistics of the program. According to her and Mrs. Barney, Mrs. Pedroza was asked to fill this position because of her commitment to the community and because other teachers were not willing to take on the task. This dual sense of extra workload and social responsibility is evident with Mrs. Bermudez's experience at Citrine. Mrs. Bermudez recounted how social events did not seem like a tremendous burden when she worked at a Latina-dominant school because of the support from other teachers:

> At my other school [Latina-dominant] I organized the *posadas* and the *dieciseis de septiembre* (16th of September). We used to have the Posadas and a big carnival. Not just me but the committees. We did a César Chávez march. But here, not so much [support]. We're organizing a Fall Festival and we are trying to get the parents to come in and do like a contest *de altares for dia de los muertos* [Day of the Dead Altars] and we are going to try and get some *posadas* done this year.

In the end, Mrs. Bermudez was left with the task of putting together the Fall Festival on her own with very few white teachers volunteering. Teacher aides and office workers—all Latinos—helped with the majority of the event.

Although most Latina teachers working in white-dominant schools did not feel much support from white teachers, their service to Latino parents and children alleviated these sentiments and motivated them to stay in these environments. Visibly frustrated, some Latina teachers like Ms. Tienda, said they would do anything such as "play the game" to get extra resources to help the community:

> I always stay out of trouble so that I can get to certain places…I felt like I needed to be a chameleon at times honestly. I felt like I needed to learn how to fit in…I needed to know when to be quiet, and when to play a certain game…You need to know when to do that.

According to Ms. Tienda, playing the game meant not expressing dissatisfaction with work routines to the principal and white teachers.

Social Exclusion

In white-dominant schools racial and social segregation were apparent among teachers. Similarly to Segura's (1990) study of secretaries who indicated they suffered lengthy periods of social ostracism in white work environments, Latina teachers said they felt out of place and some even suffered social exclusion or isolated themselves due to work conflicts. "When I got here [Citrine], I'm like looking around and I'm like, 'Oh crap! There's nobody that's like me.' I stayed in my own room and that was my fault. I stayed in my room and I didn't come out!" exclaimed Mrs. Bermudez.

However, other teachers like Mrs. Prieto-Wilke, acknowledged Latinas had different experiences working in traditionally white-female dominated occupations. She recounted not receiving recognition for her "Teacher of the Year" award. She reported, "I think sometimes perhaps because we are a minority we might feel a little left out or not appreciated as much… I don't know if it is something that is real, or actual or if it something that [happens] because you are a minority. You feel that maybe this is happening because the leadership is primarily Caucasian." Mrs. Prieto-Wilke felt that in predominantly white environments she was left out.

Latina teachers also described a small cluster of white-teachers interested in learning about Latino culture and helping the community. Mrs. Bermudez recounted befriending a white teacher at Citrine because she "was more Latina than [herself]." According to Mrs. Bermudez:

> Sometimes color, I mean race, doesn't have anything to do with it [helping the community]. She [Mrs. Furley] came to mind because she is a Huntington Beach girl and I mean she probably puts more effort than a lot of other teachers that probably are Latinas… I think it is important to acknowledge that there are a lot of people out there that do care about our kids even if they're not the same nationality or race.

Mrs. Barney concurred by saying her kindergarten colleague and "good friend"—a white teacher—worked in Santa Ana "because she wants to be in this community and help this community. She wants to work here."

The Teachers' Lounge at Citrine Elementary School

"I isolate myself pretty much."-Ms. Galvan

Latina teachers recognized subtle snubs towards Latino support staff by white teachers in the teachers' lounge in white-dominant schools. Latina teachers explained the lounge felt "stuffy", that avoidance of speaking Spanish was necessary and that support staff was rarely welcomed. Some Latina teachers avoided the teachers' lounge completely while others attempted to cross racial boundaries. Citrine's lounge was arranged with two, long, brown, parallel rectangular tables with twelve pink chairs each. In most of my visits white teachers sat at one table while Latina/o teachers and support staff sat at another with little communication or interaction between the two. Acker (2006) observes the recognition of inequality varies within the position of the beholder and interaction practices that recreate gender and racial boundaries are often subtle and unspoken.

Only one of the Latina teachers at Citrine described teachers as a "close-knit" group. Yet, while Mrs. Gonzalez stated she was close to white teachers and regularly ate in the teachers' lounge, I only saw her there once. Three Latina teachers referred to the white teachers as a family, but many other Latina teachers felt "unwelcomed" and "uncomfortable" in the lounge. At another school Mrs. Prieto-Wilke said:

> Most of the time you will see the teachers at one table and the classified [aides, janitors, office staff, and lunch ladies] at another table. If you walk into the lunch room that's exactly what you will see. All of the classified sitting at one table and all of the teachers sitting at the other table.

Divisions were also apparent at Citrine Elementary. One day, two white teachers' walked in and only addressed each other in the lounge. Neither the white teachers nor the Latina teacher aides attempted to talk to one another. The white teachers sat in the first table and

were relatively quiet and when they did talk, they only spoke to one another. The sole Asian-American teacher in the school also sat with the white teachers and chimed in on the conversation frequently. Another Latina teacher narrated her experience in the lounge this way:

> I did notice that when I would go to the teachers' lounge there wasn't really that comfort where I could go and just sit with the [white] teachers. There wasn't that comfort where we had little potlucks and events like that. There wasn't that comfort that "oh you can go ahead and join us." I could sense that and I don't know why.

Latina teachers who felt unwelcomed and excluded by white teachers chose to sit with Latino/a custodians, lunch-ladies and teacher aides because it made them feel "at home" since these were the types of jobs some of their parents and extended family members held.

Conversations in the lounge at Citrine were different from those at Kindred because of what I came to perceive as "stuffiness." The lounge at Citrine Elementary felt sterile and dry because of white teachers' formal and proper demeanor. White teachers seemed to have a close bond, however at times they felt uncomfortable with one another. This was evident through one white teacher's comment that "teachers were not getting along" at Citrine. Most of the time white teachers talked about lesson plans, the curriculum, the food they were eating (but rarely sharing), purchasing television sets and buying condos. The latter made Mrs. Prieto-Wilke sob about her experiences in the lounge because she said white teachers would brag about their lavish spending and constant trips. One of the reasons she felt uncomfortable was her belief that white teachers did not understand their class privilege.

Spanish Strains

Speaking Spanish was a source of conflict for Latina teachers working in white-dominant schools. Both Ms.Tienda and Ms. Galvan recalled being admonished for speaking Spanish in the lounge. This resulted in feeling injured, which became a reason not to return. Ms. Tienda described she and Ms. Galvan were eating in the lounge when she asked Ms. Galvan, "*¿Quiéres un pedazo de pollo*?" [Want a piece of chicken?]. Ms. Galvan said, "*No gracias.*" [No thank you]. A white teacher immediately told them in a snooty way, "Why are you speaking Spanish?" To which Ms. Galvan retorted, "That's my language!" Prieto-Wilke added:

> I sit wherever there is room and if I sit at one table [with white teachers] I am still yelling out talking to the lunch ladies at the other table…I've heard white teachers say you shouldn't speak in Spanish if somebody in the room doesn't speak English, but the lunch ladies don't feel comfortable speaking English so I'm going to speak Spanish to them. If they [white teachers] ask me, "What are you saying?" I will translate what I am saying. I'm going to talk to the person whatever language they feel comfortable speaking. Maybe it's rude of me but it really irks me when there's teachers that have been here for over 10 years and make no attempt at all to try and learn a little bit of Spanish.

In their book geared towards helping mainstream supervisors and managers understand Latino mannerisms, Chong and Baez (2005), argue that Latinos simply feel more comfortable speaking in Spanish with Spanish-speaking co-workers. While some Latinas did feel more comfortable expressing themselves in Spanish or code-switching between Spanish and English, it appeared that in white-dominant schools Spanish was minimal and was at times used by Latina teachers to make other staff feel comfortable in the work setting

or to isolate their conversation, to protect themselves from white teachers and to have privacy.

Initiating the Conversation

On some occasions Latina teachers and Latino staff would sit alongside white teachers. When white and Latina teachers or staff spoke to each other, Latinas initiated the conversation most of the time. The following vignette shows this process:

> Mrs. Soto (Latina community outreach worker) finished eating her food and stood up to throw her trash away leaving Alfredo (Latino custodian) to eat his lunch alone in the second-table. Mrs. Soto came back in to get some pie. The pies were all situated in the table with all of the white teachers. Mrs. Soto walked in between both tables and peeked over the teachers to look at the pies. She finally said, 'Can I have some pie?', in slightly broken English accent. Mrs. Sunnydale handed Mrs. Soto one of the pies and kindly said, 'Here you go Romelia.' Mrs. Soto set the pie down, cut a slice for herself and set the pie to its original location once she cut her sliver. She quietly sat back next to Alfredo.

Some teachers avoided the lounge because they did not experience any positive social relations. Ms. Galvan explained how she came to the conclusion that she needed to just eat in her room alone:

> I eat lunch in here by myself or I go out to lunch with Ms. Tienda next door. I don't eat in the lounge ever! When I started to work here I was like, "Okay, I'm going to try and be friends with all these people." I don't have a problem with white people but I don't know what it is…I used to have to make the effort to go and talk to the white teachers…it wasn't like, "Oh hey what's up?" It was a conscious effort! Then I said, "I don't have to do that." So now I don't and I pretty much just stay away. I isolate myself pretty much.

Other teachers, like Mrs. Cardenas, avoided the teachers lounge because they could not stand disparaging remarks white teachers made about Latino children, parents and immigration. Mrs. Allen was heard saying, "Why should I waste my time teaching these kids when they are just going to end up as landscapers or get pregnant?" Mrs. Cardenas especially avoided the lounge during the 2006 May Day Immigration Reform Marches taking place in response to the proposed legislation know as H.R. 4437.[10] Mrs. Cardenas explained this was a very tense time in her school because several white teachers, although they taught children of undocumented immigrants, supported the measure. Interactions and conversations in the teachers' lounge set the stage for race relations between white and Latina women in the schools.

Occupational Hierarchies

Occupational hierarchies between certificated and classified staff were always apparent at Citrine. Latino immigrants held all jobs on the lower end of the occupational hierarchy and segregation in terms of race and language prevailed. The ways in which white teachers ignored and treated lunch ladies and custodians injured some Latina teachers because their

[10] H.R. 4437 would have raised penalties for illegal immigration and would have classified undocumented immigrants and anyone who helped them to enter or remain in the U.S. as felons.

parents held some of those jobs. White teachers rarely spoke to cafeteria staff or the lunch ladies and throughout my fieldwork, none of the classified staff was ever in the lounge at the same time as white teachers. White teachers primarily spoke with office support staff and the custodian when they gave directives as Mrs. Prieto-Wilke observed:

> Well they [white teachers] talk to them when they need something. They talk to them when they need copies or when they need somebody to cover their room. I am not saying all of them because there are [white] teachers that do talk to them but to strike up a conversation and be like, '*¿Hola cómo está, qué ha estado haciendo*?' [Hi, how are you, what have you been doing?] No! I've rarely seen that unless there is a teacher that has maybe had the same aide for several years…but it's not a very common thing.

Mrs. Prieto-Wilke went on to say that some white teachers often disrespected Latino lunch ladies and the custodian, complaining about their accents, encouraging the children to do the same.

Discussion

This study took the approach of intersectionalities as a point of departure to investigate the workplace experiences of Latina teachers working in diverse school sites. Teaching is a feminized occupation, but Latina teachers working at Citrine and other white dominant schools encountered subtle forms of racism; minimized the expression of Latino culture; were burdened by heavier workloads and conflicts; and experienced heightened occupational hierarchies and exclusions in the teachers' lounge. Their ethnic and numerical minority status resulted in feelings of a disadvantaged and disempowered minority teacher; but, working for a Latino district helped them develop a missionary zeal to give back to the community, parents and children. Latina teachers working at Kindred, on the other hand, reported positive relationships with co-workers and administrators; were able to openly express cultural and political views in the teachers' lounge and in the classroom; and seemingly eliminated occupational hierarchies in social interactions with support staff. Anti-immigrant sentiment expressed by a few Latina teachers at Kindred was tolerated, but the high propositional representation of working-class, second-generation Latina women allowed for a supportive, cohesive environment.

Analyzing white teachers' workplace experiences working amongst a majority of Latina women is beyond the scope of this study. Further research should analyze whether white teachers feel excluded working in these contexts and how their definition of exclusion may be different than Latinas'. Latinas', however, have made gains and inroads into professional jobs, but there have been several detrimental policies and fear and anxiety about how Latinos—and specifically Mexican immigrants—are changing the nation, culture, and the political and economic landscape of the United States. Race scholars explain that race is about power, and for the last two decades in California and Santa Ana we have been living through a contentious time. At the heart of these debates are national immigration politics, strides to eradicate the Spanish language, and, currently, in Santa Ana there are the Mexican children's education and ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement) Raids. These fears and anxieties about Latinos do not just occur in the hallways of congress or the ballot box, nor "without racists" as Bonilla-Silva (2006) says, but through subtle interactional forms occurring daily in workplaces in schools. It is under these circumstances that Latina teachers navigate their workplaces.

Conclusions

This study contributes to the literature on organizations, race, and gender in two ways. First, this paper enhances our understanding of how racial/ethnic inequality is reproduced through informal interactions in a feminized profession when Latina teachers are a numerical minority among white teachers. Building on Kanter's (1977) tradition of dominants and minorities in organizations, my research shows that racial/ethnic composition of teachers at the school site influences the workplace interactions between white and Latina teachers because the token experience yields a different scenario for Latina women who are racialized minorities. My study adds to previous scholarship on women in the professions by documenting the racial dynamics between white and Latina women in workplaces in schools in a feminized *and* racialized profession that appears to disadvantage working-class Latina women. For these Latina women, tokenism is a racialized and gendered process shaping daily interactions with white women in elementary schools because racist Latino/a stereotypes permeate their work environments. At first glance, it appears that there is a presumed alliance between all teachers in one school, and between all women. Indeed, my study shows that there is Latina solidarity across different constituents. Nevertheless, racial/ethnic differences yield another scenario as well. Thus, here is an example of one feminized occupation where white women are excluding Latina women similarly to the men who marginalized them when they made inroads into professional occupations; in this case, their subtle snubs are informed by anti-Mexican attitudes.

Second, similarly to Wingfield (2009) who racializes the glass escalator, the author suggests upwardly mobile Latinas are "racialized tokens" when they are a numerical minority amongst white teachers. Intersectional analysis of Latina women and work tend to focus on Mexican immigrant women and Chicana women working in working-class and lower-status occupations—but not so much on the daughters "who've made it" and are upwardly mobile. With few exceptions, there is a paucity of research in regard to Latina middle-class professionals and how an intersectional analysis gives us a better understanding of their workplace experiences in professional-managerial occupations. As Latina women enter formerly middle-class and all white professional spaces such as teaching, they experience new benefits but also costs (Higginbotham 1997). Latina teachers in this study are college educated Latinas who by some members of their own community and the larger community are perceived as having "made it." These Latina teachers undermine gendered racist images and stereotypes of Latina women as uneducated, teenage mothers and attempt to dispel these images in their workplaces. My findings suggest Latina teachers prefer segregation and unity because it spares them some of the indignities and injuries that come with racial integration, difference and exclusion. They also prefer self-segregation because it allows them to more effectively do their jobs, which they perceive as serving Latino children and parents. Although, pre-Civil Rights activists worked to integrate institutions and create inroads for women and minorities, when Latina teachers break through to integration, they sometimes find less than satisfactory working conditions and that daily interactions are unpleasant in schools and worksites. This is part of the dilemma of the post-Civil Rights and post-affirmative action era. Herein lies the crux of Latina teachers as "racialized tokens" in the workplace: These are the women who "made it," but they are not longing for racial integration with white women in their workplaces. Rather, because of anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiment, they long for the satisfaction, safety and the comfort racial self-segregation provides.

Acknowledgements I am grateful to the many teachers who so generously opened the doors of their classrooms and their lives for both this project and me. I would also like to thank Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, James McKeever, Emir Loy, Jazmin Muro and the anonymous reviewers at *Qualitative Sociology* for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. And to my family, for their support.

References

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society, 4*, 139–158.
Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender and Society, 20*, 441–464.
Agius Vallejo, J., & Lee, J. (2009). Brown picket fences: The immigrant narrative and patterns of giving back among the Mexican origin middle-class in Los Angeles. *Ethnicities, 9*, 5–23.
Barrera, M. (1979). *Race and class in the southwest: A theory of racial inequality.* South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.
Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
Browne, I. (Ed.). (1999). *Latinas and African American women at work: Race, gender, and economic inequality.* New York: Sage.
Browne, I., & Askew, R. (2006). Latinas at work: Issues of gender, ethnicity, and class. In M. F. Karsten (Ed.), *Gender, race, and ethnicity in the workplace: Issues and challenges for today's organizations* (Vol. 3, pp. 223–252). United States: Praeger.
California Department of Education (2008). *Number of teachers by ethnicity 1981–82 to 2007 08*. Retrieved July 2, 2008 from http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/cb/ethteach.asp.
California Department of Education (2010). *Certificated staff by ethnicity for 2009–2010: State summary, number of staff by ethnicity.* Retrieved September 22, 2010 from http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/Staff/StaffByEth.aspx.
Cassell, J. (1998). *The woman in the surgeon's body.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Catanzarite, L. (2000). Brown collar jobs: Occupational segregation and earnings of recent immigrant Latinos. *Sociological Perspectives, 43*, 45–75.
Catanzarite, L., & Trimble, L. (2008). Latinos in the united states labor market. In H. Rodriguez, R. Saenz & C. Menjivar (Eds.), *Latinas/os in the United States: Changing the face of America* (pp. 1–19). Springer.
Chong, N., & Baez, F. (2005). *Latino culture: A dynamic force in the changing American workplace*. Yarmouth: Intercultural.
Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
Current Population Survey (2007). *Labor force statistics*. Retrieved February 20, 2010 from http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf.
Epstein, C. F. (1993). *Women in law.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Feistritzer, E. (2005). *Profile of teachers in the U.S*. Retrieved September 5, 2006 from http://www.ncei.com/POT05PRESSREL3.htm.
Fry, R., & Gonzales, F. (2008). *One in five and growing fast: A profile of hispanic students*. Retrieved February 19, 2010 from http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=92.
González, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in houses, communities, and classrooms*. New Jersey: Erlbaum.
García-López, G. (2008). "Nunca te toman en cuenta [they never take you into account]": The Challenges of inclusion and strategies for success of Chicana attorneys. *Gender & Society, 22*, 590–612.
Gutierrez, D. G. (2004). *The Columbia history of Latinos in the United States since 1960*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Higginbotham, E. (1997). Introduction. In E. Higginbotham & M. Romero (Eds.), *Women and work: Exploring race, ethnicity and class* (Vol. 6, pp. xv–xxxii). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Higginbotham, E., & Weber, L. (1992). Moving up with kin and community: Upward social mobility for black and white women. *Gender and Society, 6*, 416–440.
Hite, L. M. (2007). Hispanic women managers and professionals: Reflections on life and work. *Gender, Work and Organization, 14*, 20–36.
Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2001). *Doméstica: Immigrant workers cleaning and caring in the shadows of affluence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
Livers, A. (2006). Black women in management. In M. F. Karsten (Ed.), *Gender, race, and ethnicity in the workplace: Issues and challenges for today's organizations* (Vol. 3, pp. 223–252). United States: Praeger.

López, N. (2003). *Hopeful girls, troubled boys: Race and gender disparity in urban education*. New York: Routledge.

Lorber, J. (1984). *Women physicians: Career, status, and power*. New York and London: Tavistock.

Lorber, J. (1993). Why women physicians will never be true equals in the American medical profession. In E. Riska & K. Wegar (Eds.), *Gender, work, and medicine: Women and the medical division of labour* (pp. 62–76). Newbury Park: Sage.

Menjivar, C. (2003). The intersection of work and gender: Central American immigrant women and employment in California. In P. Hondagneu-Sotelo (Ed.), *Gender and U.S. Immigration* (pp. 101–126). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Miller, A. V., & Chapa, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Apple pie and enchiladas: Latino newcomers in the rural midwest*. TX: University of Texas Press.

Moreno, M. (Producer & Director). (2005). *Recalling Orange County*. [Videocassette]. United States: Souvenir Pictures Inc.

O.C. Almanac (2007). Hispanic or Latino population by community: Orange County, 2000 census. Retrieved February 26, 2007 from http://www.ocalmanac.com/Population/po18a.htm.

Ochoa, G. (2007). *Learning from Latino teachers*. New Jersey: Jossey-Bass.

Pierce, J. (1996). *Gender trials: Emotional lives in contemporary law firms*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Reskin, B. (2000). Getting it right: Sex and race inequality in work organizations. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*, 707–709.

Ruiz, V. L. (1998). *From out of the shadows: Mexican women in twentieth century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Santa Ana Unified School District (2007). *Quick facts*. Retrieved September 30, 2007 from http://www.sausd.us/14431028131940153/site/default.asp.

Segura, D. (1989). Chicana and Mexican immigrant women at work: The impact of class, race, and gender on occupational mobility. *Gender and Society, 3*, 37–52.

Segura, D. (1990). Chicanas and triple oppression in the labor force. In T. Córdova, N. Cantú, G. Cardenas, J. García, & C. M. Sierra (Eds.), *Chicana voices: Intersections of class, race, and gender* (pp. 47–65). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Segura, D. (1992). Chicanas in white collar jobs: "You have to prove yourself more". *Sociological Perspectives, 35*, 163–182.

Segura, D. (1994). Inside the work worlds of Chicana and Mexican immigrant women. In M. Zinn & B. Dill (Eds.), *Women of color in U.S. society* (pp. 95–112). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Segura, D. A., & Pierce, J. L. (1993). Chicana/o family structure & gender personality: Chodorow, familism, and psychoanalytic sociology revisited. *Signs, 19*, 62–91.

Smith, R. C. (2006). *Mexican New York: Transnational lives of new immigrants*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suárez, E. (2002). *A calling of the heart: A comparative study of meanings and motivations of Chicana and Mexican American teachers*. Doctoral dissertation, Department of Education, Claremont Graduate University.

Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (1993). *Gender and race inequality at work: The sources and consequences of job segregation*. Ithaca: ILR.

U.S. Census (2005). *California-Race & Hispanic origin for selected cities and other places: Earliest census to 1990*. Retrieved June 1, 2008 from http://www.census.gov/population/documentation/twps0076/CAtab.pdf.

Williams, C. (1992). The glass escalator: Hidden advantages for men in the female professions. *Social Problems, 39*, 253–267.

Winant, H. (2001). *The world is a ghetto: Race and democracy since world war II*. New York: Basic Books.

Wingfield, A. H. (2009). Racializing the glass escalator: Reconsidering men's experiences with women's work. *Gender and Society, 23*, 5–26.

Zavella, P. (1987). *Women's work and Chicano families: Cannery workers of the Santa Clara valley*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Zinn, M. B. (2001). Insider field research in minority communities. In R. M. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary field research: Perspectives and formulations* (pp. 159–166). Long Grove: Waveland.

Zinn, M. B., & Dill, B. T. (1996). Theorizing difference from multiracial feminism. *Feminist Studies, 22*, 321–331.

Zinn, M. B., Cannon, L. W., Higginbotham, E., & Hill, B. T. (1986). The costs of exclusionary practices in women's studies. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 11*(290), 303.

Glenda M. Flores is a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California (USC). She received her master's in sociology from USC and a BA in Chicano/Latino Studies and a BA Spanish Language and Culture from the University of California, Irvine (UCI). Her research interests on the intersection of race, class and gender in the workplace and Latina/o sociology are influenced in great part by her own experiences as a substitute teacher. She is currently studying Latina teachers who work in multiracial schools in greater Los Angeles.