

# Pandemic Motherhood: An Autohistoria-teoría of a Chicana Mother-Scholar

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## Introduction

Women who have children within five years of completing their Ph.D. are 20-25 percent less likely to receive tenure. Part of the reason for this is the way mothers in academia are perceived; compared to their non-parent colleagues they are seen as less competent and not as committed to the profession. Among professional women, female faculty have the highest rate of childlessness- 43 percent. For Chicana/Latina faculty the choice to become a mother is even more discouraging because of the institutional marginalization and oppression they experience on college and university campuses. In fall 2016 of all full-time faculty in degree granting postsecondary institutions, 2 percent were Chicana/Latina.

## Research Questions

1) What are the personal and professional experiences of a Chicana tenure-track professor in the time of the coronavirus pandemic? 2) What is the campus racial climate like for Mother Scholars at California State University, Sacramento?

## Methodology

Critical self-reflexivity and Chicana/Latina feminist theory are the foundations of autohistoria-teoría (Anzaldúa, 2000, 2015). Autohistoria-teoría is similar to autoethnography. What differentiates autohistoria-teoría from autoethnography are the following: 1) its Chicana/Latina feminist framing, 2) the challenge to the mind/body dichotomy, it emphasizes an embodiment of theory, 3) the attention to the experiences of marginalized communities, and 4) the connection of the creative and spiritual.

## Findings

***Finding #1 Sac State needs to invest in the recruitment and retention of Chicana/Latina faculty.***

As of November 2019, there are currently eight assistant professors that identify as Latina at Sac State (CSU PIMS Database, 2019). Yet, Sac State is a Hispanic Serving Institution, 30% of students are classified as Hispanic (IPEDS, 2018). What does it mean to be a Hispanic Serving Institution where only 10% of your faculty are Hispanic? (Sac State Office of Faculty Advancement).

***Finding #2 Chicana/Latina mother scholars experience a hostile campus racial climate at Sac State.***

Presently, there are only four lactation rooms on campus. There are no designated spots for expecting mothers. There is no on campus childcare facility that prioritizes faculty. Article 23.4 of our CBA only guarantees faculty 30 days of parental leave; the CSU expects parents to “save” their sick time to use towards parental leave.

***Finding #3 The pandemic has affected Mothers in Academia, in particular Women of Color, in detrimental ways.***

Being a working mother is challenging enough, the pandemic has only exacerbated these hardships. The pandemic will likely affect Chicana/Latina’s faculty advancement because of more caretaking responsibilities. For example, academic journals have reported fewer submissions from women (Flaherty, 2020).